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ABSTRACT

This document consists of the four issues of a newsletter published during 1996-1998. This newsletter provides a periodic update on the activities of the Early Childhood Research Working Group (ECRWG), organized in 1995 by the U.S. Department of Education and other federal government departments and agencies to promote interagency cooperation and public-private partnerships in early childhood research. Articles include: "Family Support: Program, Philosophy, Approach or Movement?" (Sharon L. Kagan, Michelle J. Neuman); "What a Difference a State Makes: Tracking the Well-Being of Young Children and Families" (Jane Knitzer, J. Lawrence Aber); "Early Childhood Development and the America Reads Challenge" (Carol Hampton Rasco); and "Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods" (Felton Earls). (AA)

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ED 427 833

# Early Childhood Update

## (A Newsletter of the Early Childhood Research Working Group (ECRWG))

Four Issues: Spring 1996
Fall 1996
Summer/Fall 1997
Summer 1998

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Early Childhood Research Working Group

# Early Childhood UPDATE

Spring 1996

## Family Support: Program, Philosophy, Approach or Movement?

**Sharon L. Kagan, Ed.D. and Michelle J. Neuman**
Yale University

Family support is soaring to the top of the national agenda. Responding to demographic and economic realities experienced by families in the U.S.—the large number of single-parent families, teen parents, mothers who work outside the home, the high proportion of families with young children living in poverty—family support provides emotional, informational, and instrumental supports to families as they confront the challenging task of raising their children. Although services help those struggling with low-incomes, unemployment, poor health, and other stressors, family support is generally accessible to all families. As the nation looks to reform its social policies and services for families, family support has garnered significant attention and interest because of its emphasis on non-hierarchal relationships, parents as partners in program governance, community resources, non-stigmatized services, prevention, building independence and self-reliance, and its strengths-based orientation.

Yet, for many, family support remains an ambiguous term; is family support a program, a philosophy, an approach, or a movement? We suggest that family support is all four—an evolving, dynamic movement composed of programs, principles, and approaches. To support this position, we trace the evolution of family support and posit that currently the family support movement is on the verge of a transition toward a new normative system for human service provision.

### The Family Support Programs

Family support began in the late 1970s as a grass-roots movement, largely characterized by scattered programs where staff provided informal support services to parents with young children. Diverse and highly idiosyncratic, the programs existed independently of one another, although they shared a desire to serve entire families and to do so in a way that was non-judgmental, highly inclusive of all family members and preventive in orientation. During this era, discrete programs proliferated, with few opportunities for linkage among them.

### The Family Support Principles

Scattered programs slowly became aware of one another and decided to come together to share their work, philosophies, and concerns. During this period, in the early- to mid-1980s, meetings were held, organizations were formed, and the ideas that framed the individual programs were codified into a working set of principles—decentralized decision-making, according power to the consumer, preventing problems before they occur, family inclusiveness, voluntary participation. Once codified, these principles guided the development of many new programs and formed the basis for the emergence of family support to the public agenda.

### The Family Support Approach

As family support emerged as a set of principles, it became apparent that its ideas were not unique to these programs. Similar ideas were being discussed as part of reform efforts that were taking hold in other domains—business, education, consumer protection, and preventative and mental health care. In fact, the ideas that undergirded family support became popular and began to transcend "the programs originally designed to contain them" (Kagan & Weissbourd, 1994, p. 475). Family support became an approach, not limited to discrete family support programs, but one that could be adapted and infused into mainstream social institutions, including public schools, health care, and social services. And isolated institutions began to adopt a family support approach.

*(Continued on pg. 4)*

### Poster Contest Winners from Landover, MD

Parents and teachers surround the young artists from Lansdowne Learning Center whose drawings appear on the NIECDE poster.

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# ED Award to Establish National Center to Enhance Early Development and Learning

**Lynn Kimmerly**
National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education

The National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education has awarded a $13.7 million, five-year cooperative agreement to the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, to establish a national center to improve and enhance the learning and development of America's young children. Collaborative research sites will be located at the University of Virginia, the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, and the University of California at Los Angeles. The Center, which is directed by Don Bailey, Ph.D., involves 19 senior investigators at the four universities working in collaboration with the Office of Educational Research and Improvement; 12 internationally recognized early educators, family researchers, and policy experts; national organizations; and a team of technical consultants.

### Research Focus

The purpose of the Center is to promote the healthy development of young children, including those placed at risk because of economic, linguistic or disability factors. Toward this end, investigators propose to identify effective practices in the care and education of young children, determine the extent to which these practices are being used, identify barriers to them, and test results and models for improvement.

Specifically, the Center will study the quality of child care and early intervention programs as well as critical transitions in the earliest years, with special attention given to transitions to kindergarten. It will also examine broad models for helping preschoolers at risk of educational failure because of failure to thrive syndrome, early onset of antisocial or behavioral problems, or family illiteracy.

Research at the new Center will generate knowledge about the complex ways in which individual, program and systems variables interact with research and public policy to influence programs designed to serve and support young children and their families. As the research progresses, investigators will focus on effective strategies for translating their findings into practice in a multitude of settings, including child care programs, early intervention programs, state and federal administrative agencies, and training programs.

### Significant Role for Social Policy Studies

One of the Center's goals is to conduct a series of major policy studies in several critical areas of early development and learning, including the quality of child care; transitions; child aggression; and professional development. Studies in the first year will examine current standards for quality child care; barriers to the implementation of existing policies; and alternative policies which hold high promise for creating positive change in child care and early intervention programs.

### Dynamic Dissemination Strategy

Early in each of the five years, the Center will conduct a large-scale, nationally representative survey which will address an early childhood topic of national importance. The investigators will categorize survey findings and generate ideas for future research directions. Results will be made available to parents, teachers, child care professionals, and state and local early childhood administrators and policymakers.

To complement the national surveys, the Center will sponsor a series of annual conferences, to be held in the latter part of the year, that will provide a synthesis of the critical issues in the field of early childhood. These interactive conferences will bring together experts from a variety of perspectives to discuss research questions, identify solutions, and generate ideas for improving programs and practices.

The Center promises to be a national collaboration involving parents, early childhood researchers, practicing professionals and government officials. They will all be working toward a common goal: to improve and enrich the lives of America's young children and their families. ■

## Calendar

| | |
|---|---|
| April 24 | Empowerment Zone Child Care Roundtable, Washington, D.C. Linda Thomas, DHHS, 202–690–7885. |
| May 7 | Early Childhood Research Working Group Meeting, Washington, D.C. Naomi Karp, DoE, 202–219–1935. |
| May 9–11 | Fifth Annual National Conference on Prevention Research, McLean, VA. (Sponsored by the National Institute of Mental Health). Linda Pickering, University of South Carolina, 803–777–9558. |
| May 10 | Deadline for submission of grant applications for Early Childhood Research Institutes (Office of Special Education Programs). G. Houle, DoE, 202–205–8971 (fax). |
| May 31 | Deadline for submission of grant applications for National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center. P. Cvach, DoE, 202–205–8971 (fax). |
| June 19 | Child Care Research Symposium, Washington, D.C. Pia Divine, DHHS, 202–690–6705. |
| June 20–23 | Head Start's Third National Research Conference, Washington, D.C. Columbia School of Public Health, 212–304–5251. |

# Research to Practice: Children in Little Walden Reach Their Full Potential

**Gail Houle**
Office of Special Education
and Rehabilitative Services

Children in the Little Walden Program at Emory University enjoy quality play time with their teacher.

Given the historically widespread controversy over many of the issues pertaining to autism, "there is remarkable agreement among researchers, clinicians, educators and parents on two consistent findings in the treatment of autism: 1) early is essential, and 2) more is better," says Dr. Gail McGee. Dr. McGee is the principal investigator and director of the Little Walden Early Intervention Program at the Emory Autism Resource Center, a component of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Emory University School of Medicine.

Little Walden (named for Thoreau's experiment in living at Walden Pond) is an example of how quickly new research-based early intervention practices can be operationalized as successful demonstration models. Little Walden, a five year research-based demonstration project funded in 1993 by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, is one of the first national models of specialized inclusive early intervention for toddlers with autism. This model intervention program for children from 18 months to 30 months of age provides a learning center for children with and without autism and home and community-based family support programs.

Little Walden features a developmental, incidental teaching curriculum specifically geared to an integrated group of typically developing children and children with autism. (Developmental, incidental teaching is a combination of student-initiated and teacher-facilitated learning whereby the child's interest determines the topic and timing of teaching episodes and the teacher determines the skills to be taught.) The curriculum was developed with input from nationally recognized experts in the fields of language development, social development, autism, and early childhood education. Intervention in language, social skills and self-care skills is blended into traditional early childhood experiences. The program is based on Dr. McGee's ground-breaking research on teaching approaches in the child's natural environment (e.g., home, preschool, community) and the treatment of preschoolers with autism.

Recognizing that families will be a consistent and dedicated resource for children with autism throughout their lives, Little Walden and Walden (its counterpart for 3–5 year-olds) both include a home-based component in which parents can best determine how to blend incidental teaching opportunities into naturally occurring home activities. The program also aims to prepare parents as advocates and collaborators in their child's education and treatment. Biweekly parent seminars offer information on issues such as evaluating classrooms, promoting good behavior, and facilitating language at home. When the children "graduate" from the Little Walden and Walden programs, Dr. McGee and her staff assist them in the transition to their next destination. For most participants, including the children with autism, the destinations are public school inclusive classrooms.

Outcome data for Little Walden will include child, family, and community indicators. In addition, preliminary financial data analysis already shows that the intensity and quality of services delivered through this model cost significantly less than some less inclusive approaches to treatment. Longitudinal data from the original Walden sample showed higher than expected vocabulary and social gains for both groups of children in the demonstration project.

Additional information on the Little Walden and Walden models may be obtained by contacting: Gail G. McGee, Ph.D., Emory Resource Center, 718 Gatewood Road, Atlanta, Georgia 30322, (404) 727–8350. ■

# ED Grant Allows CPB to Fund First Weekly Series for Parents

**Joe Caliguro**
National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), with help from a $35 million, five-year grant from the National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education, recently funded two new daily series for children and, for the first time, two accompanying weekly series for parents as part of CPB's Ready To Learn (RTL) education initiative. Ready to Learn helps preschool and early-school children and their families and caregivers—including those for whom English is a second language—move toward the realization of the first national education goal.

### "How to" Series

**Dragon Tales**, a daily animated half-hour preschool series, is designed to help children develop life skills necessary for learning, such as the ability to cope with change, make choices, and overcome fears. Targeted to children 2-5 years of age, it is anticipated that over 10 million youngsters will view the series on a regular basis.

**Show and Tell Me**, the accompanying weekly half-hour parenting series, will help educate parents and other caregivers about ways in which they can help children become ready to learn. Parent-child activities using real parents and children, role-playing games, and storytelling segments will provide parents and caregivers with specific, hands-on activities to share with their children. The producers will also create "Parenting Moments," brief between-program spots for television and radio, along with an interactive Internet component for children and families. **Dragon Tales** and **Show and Tell Me** will air on public television beginning in the 1997–98 season.

### New Literacy Initiative

**Between the Lions**, for 4 to 7 year-olds, is the first new show in decades to promote literacy and to provide young readers with the skills needed to learn how to read. The related 13-part weekly half-hour series, **Kids and How to Grow Them**, will help parents and other caregivers better connect with their children, safeguard their health, and spark their creativity. Both shows will air on public television beginning in the 1998–99 season.

The ED grant has also made possible the publication of a related newsletter, *PTV Families and Para la Familia*. The newsletter, published in both English and Spanish, will offer parents ideas for extending their children's learning when the TV set is off. Participating stations will distribute more than 1 million copies, and a version will be available on the Internet.

U.S. Department of Education funds have also been used to expand CPB's "First Book" program from three participating stations to 48 stations. These stations have distributed more than 300,000 free books to disadvantaged children who would not otherwise own them.

(Ready To Learn is not part of a competitive grant program. Congress requested the Department of Education to award the money directly to CPB. Therefore, no additional funds are available.) ■

## *Family Support (Continued from pg. 1)*

### The Family Support Movement

As family support burgeoned from programs to principles to an approach, its ideas have caught on. More and more, family support is finding its way into diverse facets of the American agenda. Family support has been manifest in legislation; it has been infused into corporate policies, striving to make business and industry more family supportive; and it has been embraced by many conventional social services bureaucracies. Presently, family support appears to be on the cusp of forming a movement, one that advocates for the creation of a new normative system of family support. Such a normative system suggests that family support will no longer be considered haphazard or unique; it will become what is normal, what prevails. Family support would become so enmeshed in the social fabric of this nation that it would not be regarded as a treatment or intervention, but as a condition of life (Garbarino & Kostelny, 1994).

### Toward a New Normative System

In order to create a new normative system, there must be societal and professional advances. Our society must make a commitment to make family support accessible and available on a voluntary basis to all families. The public must pledge durable, consistent fiscal support to the system. Such support must be accompanied by a mandate to honor the diversity of all families, and family support must be seen as an essential tool to build inclusive communities. On the professional side, family support must clarify its vision of the normative system and must define the roles of responsible parties, including government and the private sector. Conceptual work is needed to better define the outcomes associated with the normative system. Professional standards and the associated knowledge base need to be developed.

A normative system of family support is a long way off. Yet, given the state of American families, the growing recognition of the importance of family support, and its rapid trajectory from a set of unconnected programs, we see family support as a viable strategy for human service delivery. Different from eras past, the question at hand is not *will* family support survive. Today, and for the next century, we must ask, *how* can we make family support—as a set of programs, principles, approaches and a movement—survive? ■

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# Beyond the Blueprint: Directions for Research on Head Start Families

**Anne Bridgman**
Board on Children, Youth and Families

On its 30th anniversary, public acceptance of Head Start remains high, yet public understanding of what Head Start is and does remains low, and evaluation research—limited in quality and scope—is not uniformly positive.

### Changing Economic Landscape

In 1993, the Advisory Committee on Head Start Quality and Expansion within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services called for a long-term research plan for Head Start that would place the program in the broader context of research on young children, families and communities and ensure that Head Start is flexible enough to respond to new issues and to the changing social and economic circumstances of the families it serves. The Roundtable on Head Start Research—under the auspices of the Board on Children, Youth, and Families*—was convened in November of 1994 to address some of the issues recommended by the Advisory Committee. Composed of representatives from government, universities, medicine, Head Start organizations, family support programs, and foundations, the Roundtable set out to provide a systematic analysis of research needs relevant to the changing context that Head Start faces as it enters its fourth decade. The report on the Roundtable's first three meetings will be available this spring.

### New Research Options for Head Start

*Beyond the Blueprint: Directions for Research on Head Start's Families* points to a set of research options that hold the potential to reinvigorate Head Start's role as a national laboratory; link research on Head Start to other exciting developments in allied fields of research; and ensure that research on Head Start is immediately relevant to the program's efforts to provide high-quality, effective services. The following are among the issues addressed in the report:

- The challenges posed to Head Start by the increasing ethnic and linguistic diversity of the families it serves;
- The need to embed research on Head Start within its community context, paying specific attention to the effects of violent environments on Head Start and its families; and
- The implications of the changing economic landscape for how Head Start works with families, and what it means to offer families a high-quality program.

To purchase a copy of this report, which will be available in May of this year, please contact: National Academy Press, 2101 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20418; call 202–334–3313 (if you are within the Washington, D.C. area) or 800–624–6242.

*The Board on Children, Youth, and Families, established in 1993 under the joint aegis of the National Research Council (NRC) and the Institute of Medicine (IOM), was created to provide a national focal point for authoritative, nonpartisan analysis of child, youth, and family issues in the policy arena. For more information about Board projects, please write communications officer, Anne Bridgman, at the above address, call 202–334–2998, or e-mail abridgma@nas.edu. ■

### Head Start Field Trip

Children from the Head Start Program at D.C.'s Rosemount Center ride the METRO to National Airport.

# Working Group Hosts Meeting on State-Federal Partnerships in Early Childhood Research

**Lynn Kimmerly**
National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education

In anticipation of a major re-alignment of social welfare programs, the Early Childhood Research Working Group held its third group meeting on October 24, 1995, on the subject of state-federal partnerships and the impact of landmark re-structuring on the early childhood agenda. Speakers included representatives from the National Governors' Association, the National Association of State Boards of Education, the National Association of State Directors of Special Education, the Child Care Bureau, the Head Start Bureau, the Children's Bureau, the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, and the National Institute of Mental Health—all of whom will play key roles in any shift of federal programs to administration by the states.

Drawing by Shiene Misola adorns notebook cover of some Working Group members.

In a stimulating exchange of ideas, participants focused on the implications of a significant devolution of government—both in terms of research needs as well as research opportunities. Pia Divine, from the Child Care Bureau, called for federal assistance to help states create uniform definitions (e.g., coding children by birth date; coding hours of care) in order to allow meaningful comparisons of programs across states. She also suggested the establishment of "research consortia" as a cost-effective way to motivate states to include research as part of their policy agenda.

Martha Fields of the National Association of State Directors of Special Education cautioned that the promotion of successful community-designed programs depends, in part, on comparative analysis; and she encouraged the audience to look at ways in which we can measure the aggregation of data across cities. Barbara Allen-Hagen, of the Department of Justice, shared information on the Department's longitudinal study of the causes and correlations of delinquency in 70 Chicago neighborhoods. She called for agencies which are conducting neighborhood-focused projects on violence prevention in early childhood to share data among one another. Results, she reminded, are even more compelling when there is congruence across studies.

Merle McPherson of the Maternal and Child Health Bureau and Carol Williams of the Children's Bureau expressed a view held by many: There is an overriding need to forge on the federal, state and local levels a true partnership that will cut through the fragmentation, duplication and "the terrible web that we have woven for families to try to hop through." We should put in its place more nourishing community delivery systems—systems that are coordinated and culturally competent, systems which truly operationalize the "best practices" of researchers—in order to effectively deliver services to the children and families who need them. This is a challenge—and an opportunity—for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers alike as we debate the possibility of great change. ■

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Special thanks go to Kaira Oweh, age 4, for her art work on the masthead.

Early Childhood Research Working Group

# Early Childhood UPDATE

Fall 1996

## What a Difference a State Makes: Tracking the Well-Being of Young Children and Families

**Jane Knitzer and J. Lawrence Aber**
National Center for Children in Poverty
Columbia University School of Public Health

To what extent are states investing in program and/or planning strategies designed to enhance school and health-related outcomes for young children and their families before they enter school? This critical question is the focus of the first edition of *Map and Track: State Initiatives for Young Children and Families* (Knitzer & Page 1996). Released in the spring of 1996 by the National Center for Children in Poverty, *Map and Track* emphasizes state initiatives, rather than efforts linked to federal programs.

With input from national organizations and the states themselves, *Map and Track* is designed to be a tool that state policymakers, advocates, program directors, and others interested in young children and families can use to foster state-to-state learning and to document the extent to which a particular state is addressing the well-being of young children and families. A second edition, tracking changes, will be issued in 1998.

### *Map and Track* Highlights

- Three-quarters of the states (37) are supporting one or more state-funded, comprehensive program strategies explicitly targeted to young children and families, although expenditure and program scope vary greatly. One-third of the states are not only focusing on the preschool years (ages 3-5) but are developing home visiting, parent education, or family support programs targeted to infants and toddlers and their families.
- Close to 40 percent of the states are engaging in broad state-level or state- and community-level planning or system reform efforts. Many focus on linking school-based programs with child care programs.
- Overall, although there is much activity among the states on behalf of young children and their families, only eight states have developed comprehensive initiatives with linked program and planning components and media and other efforts to build understanding about the importance of early investments. Further state initiatives in most states involve support for individual program strategies, rather than efforts to build systems of supports for young children and their families that link school and community-based early care and education programs, as well as home visiting programs for infants and toddlers.
- There was no obvious pattern linking state program, planning, or comprehensive multi-strategy initiatives with levels of risk in the young child population, or patterns of state investments based on the indicators identified by the National Center for Children in Poverty.

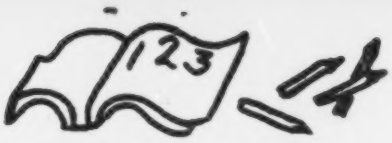
### What It All Means

*Map and Track* has several important messages. First, the fact that three-quarters of the states have recognized the importance of supporting learning and developmental experiences for children before they enter school either through home visiting, family support, or prekindergarten-type programs is encouraging, given empirical knowledge that so strongly supports early learning experiences. Second, the mechanisms for building a strong community voice on behalf of young children and families are expanding. The fact that close to half of the states already have planning processes for children and families in place, many involving a range of community voices, may provide a positive and unanticipated catalyst for the allocation of federal and state dollars in new ways. Third, some states, such as Oregon, are already experimenting with a kind of state-to-community devolution; creating, for example, "readiness to learn" flexible funding streams that communities can use to fill in gaps in services. Thus, in Oregon, Great Start grants can be used to support preventive services for children from birth to six. Fourth, the schools and departments of education are centrally involved in many initiatives for young children and families, either with direct program responsibility or as partners in collaborative efforts. In Massachusetts, for example, the Community Partnerships for Children Program (the state's prekindergarten program) provides grants to local partnerships of child care providers, Head Start programs, and schools to develop and implement joint plans to coordinate education, health, and social services. In 1995, with a budget of $14.3 million, grants were made to 130 communities.

### Implications for Research

*Map and Track* also has implications for policy-relevant research. It highights the need for a study, for example, examining the role of the schools in early

*(Continued on pg. 4)*



# Ten Policy Issues Influencing Preschool Inclusion

**Susan Janko and Alice Porter**
Early Childhood Research Institute on Inclusion

Education policies may either facilitate or impede the inclusion of preschool children with disabilities in regular school programs depending upon the interpretations and actions of school administrators, educators, and family members involved in the day-to-day process of education. This is a preliminary finding of the Early Childhood Research Institute on Inclusion (ECRII), a consortium involving researchers from the University of North Carolina, Vanderbilt University, University of Maryland, San Francisco State University, and the University of Washington. ECRII was established by the U.S. Department of Education in 1994 for the purpose of identifying barriers to the inclusion of young children with disabilities in typical education settings and investigating strategies for overcoming those barriers.

Outlined below are 10 key policy issues researchers at ECRII gleaned from an analysis of quantitative and qualitative data collected from 128 children and families, educators, and administrators from 16 early childhood school programs, and districts, in 5 states during the initial 2 years of a 5-year-study. This summary of policy issues represents the Institute's emerging understanding of the ways in which education policies influence the education services children with disabilities and their families experience every day. A more complete report, *Portraits of Inclusion Through The Eyes of Children, Families, and Teachers*, further describing these issues and sharing illustrative case studies is available from ECRII.

**Issue #1. Categorical Programs.** Federal and state laws mandating publicly funded services rely on categorical definitions to identify those children entitled to services and how those entitled should be served. These categorical services and definitions are difficult to coordinate by school administrators who must oversee multiple programs with different regulations and reporting guidelines. Moreover, inclusive preschool education programs are frequently implemented in tandem with other programs such as Head Start, Chapter 1, and community child care resulting in multiple program placements and transitions for young children, and conflicting educational models and philosophies for families and educators.

**Issue #2. Categorical Funding.** Early childhood special education services are federally required, but they are supported primarily by state, local, and private funding sources. Because publicly supported early childhood programs are not universally available to young children in the United States, school district administrators must create inclusive preschool programs by combining discrete programs and funding sources in an effort to address the complex and changing needs of children and families. Discrete programs and funding require school districts to "sort" children into program categories, and they require intensive oversight.

**Issue #3. Categorical Thinking.** Schools increasingly acknowledge the importance of cooperative ownership and responsibility among families, communities, and schools in educating children. But much of school financing, staffing, and administration continues to center on discrete programs rather than on the unique needs of individual children. School districts may administer a complex mix of services that "look good on paper" and meet minimum legal requirements while programs continue to operate in isolation, confounding teachers and families and violating the central premise of inclusive education—to promote children's membership and participation in their neighborhood schools and communities.

**Issue #4. Cultural Context of Education.** Schools in the United States struggle to design programs that accommodate the growing number of children and families from diverse geographic, linguistic, and economic backgrounds. In addition, changing family configurations and social challenges—such as single-parent families, parental drug use, homelessness, and family violence–have resulted in an increase in the number of children served in special education programs and the problems educators must address. The majority of these children do not have clearly identifiable disabilities; rather their more subtle disabilities are linked to the declining social, health, and economic status of young children in our nation.

**Issue #5. Community Context of Education.** Federal and state governments create most early childhood special education policies, but school districts are run locally, and their services reflect local values about education. Some small- to mid-sized school districts have successful inclusive classrooms because communication among teachers, families, and the community is frequent, direct, and informal. School districts that encourage creative models—such as multi-age groupings, alternative curricula, and coordinated services that address the range of children's social, health, and education needs—appear to be more likely to embrace children with diverse skills and abilities.

**Issue #6. Parochial Professional Development and Practice.** Inclusive models of education alter the environment in which regular educators, special educators, and therapists work. In addition, educators unaccustomed to children with disabilities—such as families who did not anticipate the birth of a child with disabilities—especially need information and support. To accommodate a more diverse group of students, educators and administrators from multiple disciplines need coordinated training beginning during pre-service education at colleges and universities and continuing with professional development activities as they practice.

**Issue #7. Unions, Litigation, and Inclusion.** The autonomy and creativity necessary for inclusion is restricted by long-term contracts with teachers' unions and by fear of litigation from families and advocacy groups. Conflict may also occur among early childhood regular educators who are rarely union members and make substantially lower salaries than public school employees.

*(Continued on pg. 6)*

# National Research Center on Early Development and Learning Begins Work by Building Partnerships

**Pam Winton**
National Research Center on Early Development and Learning

The new National Research Center on Early Development and Learning (NCEDL), located at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, is based on the premise that research activities be linked to the early childhood work being done by other groups and organizations. To that end, the Center has already taken the first steps to do just that. NCEDL is building partnerships—partnerships with other research and development centers and regional educational laboratories funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) and partnerships with consumers (e.g., parents, child care providers, teachers, and other consumers of research information).

### Partnerships With R&D Centers, Regional Educational Labs

- NCEDL and the Southeastern Regional Vision for Education (SERVE), OERI's regional laboratory with a specialty area in early childhood education, will collaborate in the areas of quality child care definitions and models, professional development, strategies for creating linkages across agencies in communities, and early childhood policies. NCEDL and SERVE also are planning to hold a policy summit on welfare reform in the spring of 1997. For more information about the policy summit, contact James Gallagher, NCEDL, at (919) 962–7373 or Nancy Livesay, SERVE, at (904) 671–6076.
- NCEDL and the National Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence at the University of California at Santa Cruz will collaborate on studies that investigate "why" questions asked by young children identified as "at risk" for educational failure because of limited-English proficiency and/or poverty. The studies focus on the nature of explanatory conversations at home and at school and on ways that parents and teachers can best encourage children's natural curiosity about scientific domains. Young children's "why" questions about events in the world indicate curiosity about scientific topics, and conversations that are initiated by such questions present a window on children's thinking as well as an opportunity for parents and teachers to encourage a positive attitude toward science discovery and explanation. Links between home and school will be explored in several school and home activity settings. For more information, please contact Maureen Callanan, University of California, at (408) 459–3147 or Mary Ruth Coleman, NCEDL, at (919) 962–7375.

Staff of the National Research Center on Early Development and Learning. Above, left to right, Pam Winton, director, "Translation of Research to Practice" strand; Gina Harrison, director, publications office; Loyd Little, information specialist; Lynette Derkes, assistant NCEDL director; and Don Bailey, director and principal NCEDL investigator.

### Partnerships With Consumers

To ensure consumer participation in the research process, NCEDL is, and will continue, holding focus groups on issues related to early childhood development and is working with consumer project advisory boards (one will be established for each NCEDL project). Recently, the policy strand of NCEDL convened a focus group made up of resource and referral agency employees, child care providers, and consultants for state-level child care agencies to guide research on child care policies. A focus group also was held with families and service providers to discuss quality early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities. Conversations from both meetings are helping to define issues for further study and to develop measures related to child care policies. ■

### NCEDL's 5-Year Goals

OERI's National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education awarded a $13.7 million, 5-year cooperative agreement to the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill to establish a national center to improve and enhance the learning and development of America's young children. The Center—with collaborative sites at the University of Virginia, the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, and the University of California at Los Angeles—has been named the National Research Center on Early Development and Learning. The Center's 5-year *major* goals include: (1) studying quality child care and intervention programs; (2) studying transitions during the early childhood years, with a special focus on the transition to kindergarten; (3) determining the effectiveness of early intervention and family support for children at risk for educational failure due to antisocial or behavioral problems, children at risk for illiteracy, and infants who fail to thrive; (4) reporting on child care quality, transitions, and ecologically based interventions using a model of ecological barriers interfering with policy implementation; and (5) developing a dynamic, effective dissemination strategy to translate research into practice and systems change in multiple settings.



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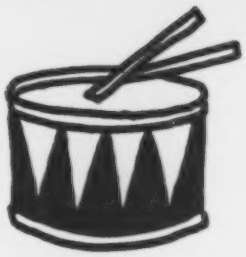

# Policy Studies and Young Children

**James Gallagher**
National Research Center on Early Development and Learning

The growing importance of policy studies and research in early childhood has emerged from the increasing recognition that public policy has a substantial role to play in the delivery of quality services to children and families. Some of the targets of such policy research are to discover how particular policies are formulated; how they gain official sanction and approval; and, perhaps most importantly, how such policies are implemented. One of the definitions of policy is:

> Social policies are the rules and standards whereby scarce public resources are allocated to almost unlimited social needs. Such statements of social policy should provide the answer to four questions: (1) Who shall receive the resources? (2) Who shall deliver the resources? (3) What is the nature of the services to be delivered? and (4) What are the conditions under which the services will be delivered? (Gallagher 1994)

Most public policies are, in fact, social hypotheses—for example, "Certified teachers will provide better instruction," or "Special education will improve the social skills of children with special needs," or that "A lower teacher/child ratio will improve day care quality." Like scientific hypotheses, some of these policy hypotheses may be true, some false, and some partially true under certain conditions. Since such policies carry important implications for the allocation of those scarce resources, it becomes important to document the correctness of the various hypotheses, or to entertain some alternative hypotheses. Such policies cannot be treated as manifest truths without proper testing.

The goal of effective public policy is to maximize the positive benefits of particular programs or interventions. Such design increases the likelihood for favorable outcomes, but does not guarantee them. A standard for a low teacher/child ratio, for example, may make it more likely that good instruction will take place but will not, of course, guarantee it.

The early childhood field seems to face two well-established facts: first, the ingredients of child care quality are agreed upon by diverse professionals (see standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children); and second, when actual child care programs are studied, they often fall considerably short of the quality standards that knowledgeable professionals have set (see Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes Study Team, 1995). One set of questions then is: What keeps us from doing what we know we should do in such programs? Cost is surely one significant factor, but what about other factors—lack of adequate personnel preparation, professional rivalries with and across disciplines, consumer awareness of quality, inability to organize support systems for the existing programs, and cultural differences between client and provider.

## Next Steps

The newly established National Research Center on Early Development and Learning at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has a major policy studies component, which will—as one of its first investigations—pursue the policy barriers that block the delivery of quality child care services. As part of its investigation, and as a first step in exploring potential positive actions, Center staff will conduct and analyze a series of focus group discussions in four states with experienced professionals in leadership positions of early childhood programs in order to obtain their perceptions of existing barriers. These policy studies will complement other NCEDL research studies on the effects of cost on quality. These discussions, hopefully, will provide the Center with enough information to suggest some possible policy options that might be available to state and national leaders to improve the existing quality of such programs.

For more information about the policy studies, please contact James Gallagher or Robin Rooney, NCEDL, at (919) 962–7373 or fax (919) 962–7328. ■

## REFERENCES

Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes Study Team (1995). *Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes in Child Care Centers Study*, Public Report. The study was a collaborative project of the University of Colorado at Denver, University of California at Los Angeles, University of North Carolina, and Yale.

Gallagher, James (1994). Policy Designed for Diversity: New Initiatives for Children with Disabilities. In D. Bryant & M. Graham (Eds.), *Implementing Early Intervention* (p. 336-350). New York: Guilford Publications.

## *What a Difference (Continued from pg. 1)*

childhood programs. It also suggests a framework through which specific groups of children might be examined, for example, young children living in urban poverty (Knitzer, in press); and it underscores the need to examine initiatives for young children and families in the context of recent changes related to the Family Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (Public Law 103-193). Perhaps, most importantly, *Map and Track* highlights the need to gather common information on early childhood indicators and the transition to school that can be used across programs, agencies, and states. Only then will it truly be possible to use the kind of data *Map and Track* reports to enhance the well-being of young children and the likelihood of later success in school.

To learn more about *Map and Track* or to purchase a copy of the report, please contact the National Center for Children in Poverty, 154 Haven Avenue, New York, New York 10032; e-mail: ejs@columbia.edu; internet: www:http://cpmcnet.columbia.edu/dept/nccp/. ■

## REFERENCE

Knitzer, Jane and Page, Stephen (1996). *Map and Track: State Initiatives for Young Children and Families*. New York: National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University School of Public Health.



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# Cooperative Extension Service Assistance to Low-Income Families

**Alma Hobbs**
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Millions of children, youth, and families in almost every community across the country will be impacted by the provisions outlined in the welfare reform bill. States and local governments will face tremendous challenges as they plan and implement programs that will help people acquire skills needed to transition from welfare to work, secure quality child care services, manage limited resources, and improve nutritional quality of diets. While many public and private agencies and organizations will be contributing to the solutions, the Cooperative Extension System (CES) has unique capabilities to reach into every community across the country, deliver research-based educational programs, and facilitate community collaborations.

The Cooperative Extension System—drawing on the vast resources and networks of 105 land-grant universities in all 50 states and 6 territories and anchored in each of the country's 3,150 counties—has a proven track record of positively impacting these issues for over 80 years. The CES is poised and positioned to assist the citizens of the country to move from welfare to work and meet the broad goals of welfare reform in the following areas:

**Workforce Preparation.** The CES in a majority of states is addressing some aspect of youth and adult employability. Programs include career development, community development, national and community service, entrepreneurial and high-risk youth. These programs:

- Enhance the economic stability of communities;
- Create pools of skilled and competent employees;
- Increase the financial security and quality of life for critical audiences; and
- Increase earning potential through education and training.

**Child Care.** For over 25 years, the CES has improved the quality of family-based, center-based, and school-aged child care programs through staff training; strengthened parenting skills; facilitated community collaborations in creating and administering child care programs; and raised the academic and social competencies of youth. In the context of welfare reform, the CES will continue to provide:

- Consumer education for families about quality child care;
- Parenting education;
- Child care provider education; and
- Facilitation to assisting communities in increasing the availability of child care.

**Family Development and Resource Management.** This nationwide, nonformal educational program addresses the most pressing economic and social issues facing families. Programs strengthen the capacity of:

- Families to nurture, support, and guide their members throughout their lives;
- Families to establish and maintain economic security and a quality environment; and
- Families and communities to be partners in building strong families and caring, safe communities.

**Nutrition Education.** For over 28 years, the Expanded Food and Nutrition Program and other nutrition education programs have used an experiential learning process that has taught limited resource families:

- How to make good choices to improve the nutritional quality of meals;
- How to select and buy food that meets the nutritional needs of their famiiy;
- New skills in food production, preparation, storage, safety and sanitation; and
- Skills to manage food budgets and related resources such as food stamps.

If you would like to know more about the full scope and capacity of the Cooperative Extension System to address issues involving the workforce, child care, families, and nutrition education, contact:

Alma C. Hobbs,
Deputy Administrator
Families, 4-H and Nutrition
Cooperative State Research,
Education, and Extension
Service
Phone (202) 720–2908
Internet: ahobbs@reeusda.gov

## Calendar

| | |
|---|---|
| November 6–8 | National TA meeting, Washington, DC (jointly sponsored by the Office of Special Education Programs and NEC*TAS involving the Part H Infant-Toddler Program, the Section 619 Preschool Children with Disabilities Program, and OSEP's Early Childhood Discretionary Projects). Gail Houle, HHS, 202–205–9045. |
| December 5–6 | Institute on the Essentials of an Inclusive School's Curriculum, Collaboration, and Instruction, Albuquerque, NM. Council for Exceptional Children, 1–800–264–9446. |
| December 7–11 | Annual International Division for Early Childhood Conference on Children with Special Needs and their Families, Phoenix, AZ. DEC International Conference, 410–269–6801. |
| January 8–10, 1997 | Symposium on Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Exceptional Learners, New Orleans, LA (sponsored by the Council for Exceptional Children in collaboration with the Division for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Exceptional Children), 1–800–264–9446. |
| April 9–13 | Council for Exceptional Children's Annual Convention. Salt Lake City, UT. Council for Exceptional Children, 1–800–486–5773. |

## *Ten Policy Issues (Continued from pg. 2)*

Truly inclusive programs demand that teachers, administrators, families, and advocates alike shift their focus from the letter of the law (contracts, rights, and due process) to the spirit of the law (collaboration and communitywide solutions).

**Issue #8. Regulation and Compliance, or Accountability and Quality.** Inclusive education programs must comply with multiple federal and state regulations and account for use of public monies from multiple sources. Regulation is a necessary burden that consumes staff time, generates paperwork, and requires strict adherence to mandated procedures and timelines. Regulations discourage creativity and flexibility among administrators, and are unrelated to standards of program quality and monitoring for program development and improvement.

**Issue #9. Ebb and Flow of Public Dollars.** About 56 percent of special education costs are in excess of the cost of regular education. These "excess costs" are covered by state funds; the state contribution ranges from 11 percent of costs to 95 percent. Less than 8 percent of excess costs are covered by the federal government. State and local entities must allocate funds to implement mandated special education services, but when sufficient resources are lacking, school district management may shift priorities and resources in a manner that is idiosyncratic and reactive rather than strategic and anticipatory.

**Issue #10. Costs of Inclusion.** Federal and state agencies during the 1990s have learned to save costs by shifting clients, when possible, to other programs for which they may be eligible. It has recently become common practice, for example, for children with disabilities to be enrolled in federal disability programs to reduce fiscal pressures on states. Inclusion is a policy that contradicts this trend by bringing individuals, programs, and budgets together; by emphasizing collaboration; and by blurring agency boundaries and jurisdictions. This collaboration requires the documentation of cross-categorical, real-time, and associated (e.g., transportation, training) costs of inclusion. This is one reason why, although educating children with disabilities in typical settings undeniably affects special education costs, no one knows exactly how.

(*The Early Childhood Research Institute on Inclusion invites comments and questions regarding these preliminary policy issues. Send comments to Susan Janko at the University of Washington, College of Education, Box 353600, Seattle, Washington 98195; e-mail: sjanko@u.washington.edu; phone: (206) 543–1827. For information about other work conducted by ECRII, please contact Sam Odom, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, School of Education, CB 3500–Peabody Hall, Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27599; e-mail: samodom@unc.edu; phone: (919) 933–5579.) ■

# Field-Initiated Studies Grants Awarded

**Joe Caliguro**
National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education

The National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education within the Office of Educational Research and Improvement has funded 7 new Field-Initiated Studies grants totaling approximately $1.3 million for the first year of projects lasting up to 3 years. Selected from 107 proposals, the grantees and their projects are:

The **University of Maryland at College Park, Maryland,** will examine the effects of exposure to community violence on African-American Head Start children's cognitive, motor, and socioemotional development. Eight Head Start teachers will implement a research-based intervention aimed at reducing the effects of violence and substituting positive behaviors in place of behavior problems that may result from exposure to violence.
*Project director: Suzanne Randolph*

The **University of California at Berkeley** will determine how to help parents and preschool teachers prepare young children for school mathematics. The project will develop a culturally and developmentally appropriate prekindergarten math curriculum and evaluate instructional approaches parents and preschool teachers can use to teach the curriculum.
*Project director: Prentice Starkey.*

**Boston University** will establish a collaborative project between an early childhood education program and an intergenerational literacy project that addresses the need to teach parents and teachers best ways to systemically collaborate with each other to support the learning of children pre-K through second grade. Most of the participants in the intergenerational project are immigrant families. *Project director: Jeanne Paratore*

The **University of Connecticut Health Center** will study the effectiveness of a social competence curriculum with 25 Connecticut toddlers with disabilities who attend inclusive childcare centers. The curriculum will be embedded in the children's individualized early intervention services. Twenty-five other toddlers also will be in the study, but they will receive only the traditional inclusive early intervention.
*Project director: Mary Beth Brunder*

**Utah State University** will design and implement a resiliency theory-based model of home visiting and test the effectiveness of the model in four of seven sites throughout Utah. The intervention model will be strengths-based and culturally sensitive. *Project director: Mark Innocenti*

**SRI International** will examine the early impact of the Parents as Teachers (PAT) Program in assisting low-income parents in urban areas to enhance the development of their children from birth through age 2. The proposed study is the first stage of a larger research effort to assess the short- and long-term child and family impacts of PAT.
*Project director: Mary Wagner*

**Children's Hospital Medical Center of Akron, Ohio,** will compare two alternative procedures using Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) curricula designed to meet the educational and developmental needs of young children with disabilities. One approach retains the elements of traditional early childhood special education and weaves these into the activities and routines associated with DAP curricula. The second modifies DAP curricula to accommodate the individual learning and developmental characteristics of children with disabilities.
*Project director: Gerald Mahoney*

Proposals are selected for funding after being reviewed and evaluated by scholars and practitioners from outside of the government. For more information about the FIS program, call Joe Caliguro at (202) 219–1596. ■

*Early Childhood Update* is published by the Department of Education's National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education.

**U.S. Department of Education**
Richard W. Riley
*Secretary*

**Office of Educational Research and Improvement**
Sharon P. Robinson
*Assistant Secretary*

**National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education**
Naomi Karp
*Director*

Special thanks go to Kaira Oweh, age 4, for her artwork on the masthead.

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Early Childhood Research Working Group

# Early Childhood UPDATE

**Summer/Fall 1997**

## Early Childhood Development and the America Reads Challenge

**Editor's Note:** This double issue is committed to the subject of emergent literacy and efforts to assist children's early reading.

**Carol Hampton Rasco**
U.S. Department of Education
Director, America Reads Challenge

Earlier this year, President Clinton announced his proposal for the America Reads Challenge, an initiative to ensure that every child reads well and independently by the end of third grade. In its simplest terms, the America Reads Challenge is exactly what its name implies—a challenge that asks all citizens to identify what role they can play, professionally and personally, to help create communities of strong readers.

As Early Childhood Specialists, you understand how important it is to provide children with solid language and listening skills as the means to future success in reading. Your expertise and close working relationship with families and caregivers provides you with opportunities to make a significant contribution toward preparing young children for reading readiness in their earliest education setting. The America Reads Challenge recognizes this valuable contribution and is designed to support your professional efforts by providing the potential for expanded programs and services.

### Why We Need the America Reads Challenge

The America Reads Challenge recognizes that 40 percent of America's fourth-graders cannot read at the basic level on challenging national reading assessments. Research shows that if students can't read well by the third grade, their chances for later success are significantly diminished, including a greater likelihood of dropping out, fewer job options, and increased delinquent behaviors.

Study after study finds that early interaction with children to help them acquire language skills can be a determining factor for future reading success. As children get older, studies show that sustained individualized attention and tutoring after school and over the summer, when combined with parental involvement and quality school instruction, can raise reading levels. Research also shows that parents and other concerned individuals in local communities and the private sector can make a valuable contribution by serving as tutors and mentors. The America Reads Challenge builds on the groundwork laid by early childhood educators, classroom teachers, librarians, and reading specialists by drawing upon the invigorating spirit of community volunteers to complement existing reading programs.

### How America Reads Works

America Reads asks schools and communities to examine where their students are with regard to success in reading and where they want them to be. Based on these joint findings, stakeholders can determine what types of programs are appropriate for the students in their communities and then develop appropriate models to move children to the levels of expectation. Overall, the America Reads Challenge will build on, expand, and initiate thousands of local efforts to improve reading. It also will build upon nationwide efforts such as:

- **Read*Write*Now!**: The Department of Education designed this summer program in 1994 with 50 reading and literacy groups to help fight the "summer reading drop off." The program encourages children to read 30 minutes a day at least once or twice a week with an older reading partner, get a library card and use it, and learn a new vocabulary word each day. The key to this program's success is its linking of teens and adults with young learners, a component often lacking in other reading programs.
- **Corporation for National Service**: National service grant programs that engage volunteer tutors in literacy efforts are working in hundreds of communities nationwide. This focus will continue to increase as all branches of national service—AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America, and the Senior Corps—make childhood literacy a higher priority in their grant process.
- **Federal Work Study (FWS)**: Colleges and universities throughout the nation received a 35 percent increase in Federal Work-Study funding in July of 1997. President Clinton has challenged all colleges and universities to pledge a substantial portion of their FWS increase for tutoring preschool through elementary school children in reading. In exchange, Education Secretary Richard Riley

*(Continued on pg. 2)*


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*America Reads Challenge (Continued from pg. 1)*

will waive the requirement for these colleges to match 25 percent of the funds for FWS students who serve as reading tutors. Nearly 600 colleges and universities have already signed on to the Challenge to date.

These and many other resources are already available in communities nationwide. The America Reads Challenge will help expand these programs and draw greater attention to the ways that communities can access them to improve the reading levels of their young people.

**America Reads Legislation and Proposed Funding**

- **America Reads Challenge Legislation**: The Administration is proposing legislation that will launch the first nationwide effort to supplement classroom instruction in reading with high-quality volunteer tutoring, primarily after school and during summers. If enacted, the proposal would fund the start-up or expansion of community partnerships among schools, libraries, community organizations, businesses, youth-serving groups, and local literacy projects, among others, working to help children with reading.
- **Parents as First Teachers Grants**: The legislation would create Parents as First Teachers grants to support efforts that help parents who want to be active partners with their children as they make the transition into school, and throughout their experience with education.

**Additional Focus on Early Childhood Development**

The America Reads Challenge seeks to reinforce the importance of skill-building activities for children beginning at birth, and of programs that encourage and support parent involvement in these activities. A number of existing federal resources and programs already delivering services to families with young children or involved in parent education and skills training can be strengthened in order to better educate and assist families with early childhood development and early literacy skills. For example, one million 3- and 4-year olds will be reached through the expansion of Head Start programs, already a part of President Clinton's balanced budget. Additional investments are included in President Clinton's balanced budget plan to strengthen family literacy efforts by expanding the Even Start Program.

For more information on the America Reads Challenge or to receive related publications, please call 1-800-USA-LEARN, or visit the America Reads Challenge home page on the Internet at http:\www.ed.gov.inits.americareads. ◆

# Family Literacy Studies

## Intergenerational Family Literacy Programs—North Carolina's Longitudinal Study

**Barbara Hanna Wasik**
National Center for Early Development and Learning
University of North Carolina

Intergenerational family literacy programs have historically been designed to break the cycle of low literacy skills within families by focusing on the needs of both parents and children. The underlying belief of family literacy programs is that children's gains will be more enduring when their parents are directly involved. Therefore, programs are designed to meet the parents' language, literacy and family support needs. Comprehensive family literacy programs include adult education, early childhood education, parent education and support, and interactive literacy activities between parents and children.

Although family literacy interventions are rapidly growing in the United States, some fundamental questions need intensive examination. For example, additional information is needed on the processes and characteristics of the programs and the integration of program components. Both short-term and long-term outcomes for children, parents, and families need to be examined in more depth. We need additional information on the relation between program and participant characteristics with outcomes.

The National Center for Early Development and Learning, The National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education's national research center at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, has begun work on a three-part intergenerational family literacy study to answer these questions. The evaluation program will consist of: (1) a longitudinal evaluation of existing comprehensive family literacy programs and their effects on children and families; (2) an evaluation of the programs themselves; and (3) a longitudinal case study of a portion of families enrolled in the participating family literacy programs.

The longitudinal study will examine the processes and outcomes of intergenerational family literacy programs that have adult education, early childhood education, and parental support and education. Family and child outcomes will be assessed and families will be followed through the child's early elementary years. In addition, the study will examine family literacy program characteristics to learn more about recruitment, staffing, and service coordination, as well as barriers and facilitators of program implementation. Case studies of several of the enrolled families will also be conducted. This research project will begin data collection in the fall of 1997 and continue through 2001. Data will be analyzed on both a yearly basis and at the completion of the project. Results should provide valuable information for program directors, researchers, and policy makers. For additional information, please contact Dr. Barbara Hanna Wasik, Principal Investigator, School of Education, CD#3500, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3500. Phone: (919) 962-0780. ◆



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# Parents as Teachers

## Nurturing Literacy in the Very Young

**Mildred Winter**
Executive Director
Parents as Teachers

Beginning at the beginning is the hallmark of the Parents as Teachers (PAT) program, a home-school community partnership that extends from birth to age 5 and helps parents give their child the best possible start in life. Begun in Missouri and replicated in 47 other states and 6 other countries, the Parents as Teachers program is based on the philosophy that parents are a child's first and most influential teachers, and that the school's role in the early years is to assist families in giving their children a solid educational foundation.

An emphasis on the child's language development permeates the Parents as Teachers program. PAT shows parents, from their first interactions with their newborns, the importance of responding to the child's vocalizations and how to capture the teachable moments in everyday living to enhance language development. Parents are encouraged to be attentive listeners and appropriate questioners as they learn to engage their young child in conversations about what is happening around them.

Involving babies with books from infancy on and helping children develop a love of stories is a part of every PAT program. Parent educators routinely use developmentally appropriate books during home visits to show parents the kinds of books the child will enjoy at each age and to model their use with the child. Parents of newborns, for example, are encouraged to recite nursery rhymes to their babies so they can enjoy the rhythm of the language while being held close. As their baby grows, the parents learn to expect her to mouth vinyl and cardboard books as she explores her environment. As manipulation gives way to a greater interest in the content of books, parents are shown how to choose books with bright, simple pictures with few words; they are encouraged to store books always within the child's reach. Parent educators model expressive reading of simple stories for older toddlers, with gradual movement toward longer, yet always appropriate, books.

Parent-child group meetings regularly include story times for toddlers and preschoolers; sometimes these are "bedtime story times," when children come in pajamas and bring their teddy bears. Parents are encouraged to use community libraries; some school districts allow PAT parents to borrow books from elementary school libraries—a meaningful effort to bring young families to school early, as well as to promote literacy.

For more information, please contact Mildred M. Winter, Executive Director (314) 432-4330 or patnc@patnc.org ◆

Parent and child participants in the Parents As Teachers Program.

# New Reading Center

**Dave Thomas**
Office of Public Affairs
U.S. Department of Education

U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley announced on August 26, 1997 the award of a $2.4 million grant to the University of Michigan's National Research Center on Early Reading Achievement.

This grant will examine successful reading practices that link homes and schools, provide community resources for family reading, and establish solid ties to effective preschool practices.

In addition, researchers will follow examples of best practices focusing on effective teaching of reading in early primary grades and then disseminate the results to educators.

Collaborating with the National Research Center in the five-year project are Michigan State University, the University of Minnesota, the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Southern California, and the University of Virginia.

The contact at the University of Michigan is Elfrieda Hiebert (313) 936-9314. ◆



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# Parents as Teachers Program

## Assessing the Impacts on Language- and Literacy-Related Behaviors and Outcomes

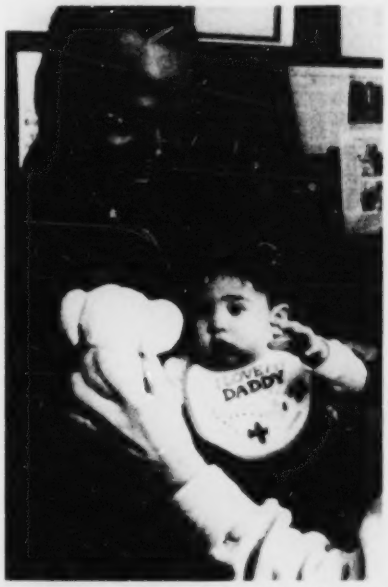
**Mary Wagner**
Center for Education and
Human Services
SRI International

The National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education and three private foundations are funding the first multi-site evaluation of the Parents as Teachers (PAT) model of parenting education for families with young children. PAT programs have been implemented in more than 2,000 communities in 48 states and Australia. They provide families with home visits and information on child development and ways to encourage learning; group meetings with other parents to share experiences and gain new insights; screening of children's development for early detection of problems; and linkage with providers of needed services that are beyond the scope of the program.

The three-year evaluation, which employs a randomized experimental design, is being conducted by SRI International (formerly Stanford Research Institute) in collaboration with the Parents as Teachers National Center. This partnership will strengthen the linkage between findings of this evaluation and PAT program improvement and parent educator training. Participating communities include Newark, DE; Wichita, KS; Winston-Salem, NC; and Fort Worth, TX.

In addition to looking at several aspects of program implementation and program participation by enrolled families, the SRI evaluation is assessing a variety of parent and child impacts. Among them are parents' own literacy-related behaviors, language- and literacy-promoting behaviors regarding their young children, and children's language development.

The evaluation reflects the emphasis on children's language development that is evident in the PAT program. "PAT shows parents from their first interactions with their newborns, the importance of responding to the child's vocalizations and how to capture the teachable moments in everyday living




Parent and child participants in the Parents As Teachers Program.

to enhance language development. Involving babies with books from infancy on and helping children develop a love of stories is a part of every PAT program" (Winter and Rouse, 1991).

A variety of tools are being used to assess language- and literacy-related behaviors and outcomes. These tools are being employed by "field evaluators," who are hired, trained, and supervised by SRI to conduct assessments with participant and control group families in their homes at or around children's first, second, and third birthdays.

At each annual assessment, field evaluators interview parents to obtain background information on the families and their activities. The parent (usually the mother) is asked about her own literacy behaviors, (e.g., "About how often do you read a newspaper?" "Read a magazine?") and about relevant household activities (e.g., "About how much is the TV on in your house in a typical day?"). In addition, she is asked about activities an adult might engage in with her child at home (e.g., "About how often does someone in your household read to or look at books with your child?" "Tell stories, say nursery rhymes, or sing children's songs with your child?).

The parent is also asked about her knowledge of parenting practices and child development. The parenting knowledge questionnaire is tailored to the age of the child at each assessment and includes, among other topics, several agree/disagree statements regarding literacy and language development (e.g., "Babies aren't interested in books before the age of 1"; "Talking to a child about things he or she is doing helps the child's mental development."). In addition, field evaluators administer the HOME Inventory, from which a subscale has been created that includes items related to literacy (e.g., "Mother reads stories at least three times weekly," "Mother talks to child while doing her work.")

Children's language development is assessed when children are 2 years old using the communication subscale of the Development Profile (DP) II ( e.g., "Does the child use at least 40 different words when speaking?" "Does the child repeat parts of nursery rhymes or join in when others say them?") For 3-year-olds, the DPII is repeated, and children are administered the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test in either English or Spanish. Parents also are asked to report their child's understanding of letters of the alphabet and numbers, as indicators of emerging literacy and numeracy, using questions from the National Household Education Survey.

Analyses of these data will identify the impacts of PAT participation at different levels on parents' literacy-related behaviors and on children's language acquisition. The evaluation will address variations in the program's effectiveness for families and children of different backgrounds and for children whose parents exhibit different degrees of support for language and literacy development.

Findings from the recently begun evaluation will be available in 2000. For more information, please contact Mary Wagner at SRI International, (415) 859-2867. ◆

# Language and Literacy Development

**Reid Lyon**
The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
The National Institutes of Health

The following article is a summary of testimony delivered before the House Committee on Education and the Workforce on July 10, 1997.

**How do children learn to read?**

NICHD research has found that in order for a beginning reader to learn how to connect or translate printed symbols (letters and letter patterns) into sound, the would-be reader must understand that our speech can be segmented or broken into small sounds (phoneme awareness) and that the segmented units of speech can be represented by printed forms (phonics). This understanding that written spellings systematically represent the phonemes of spoken words (termed the alphabetic principle) is absolutely necessary for the development of accurate and rapid word reading skills. The development of phoneme awareness, the development of an understanding of the alphabetic principle, and the translation of these skills to the application of phonics in reading and spelling words are non-negotiable beginning reading skills that all children must master in order to understand what they read and to learn from their reading sessions. In addition to learning how to "sound out" new and unfamiliar words, the beginning readers must eventually become proficient in reading at a fast pace larger units of print such as syllable pattern, meaningful roots, suffixes, and whole words. This pace allows for reading fluency because, as one child said, "If you don't ride fast enough, you fall off."

The ultimate goal of reading instruction is to enable children to understand what they read. Children who comprehend well seem to be able to activate their relevant background knowledge when reading. That is, they can relate what is on the page to what they already know. Good vocabularies help, as does a knack for summarizing, predicting, and clarifying what they have read. Children's ability to understand what they are reading is inextricably linked to their background knowledge. Young children who are given opportunities to learn, think, and talk about new areas of knowledge will gain much from reading.

**Why do so many children have difficulty learning to read?**

In general, children who are most at-risk for reading failure are those who enter school with limited exposure to language and thus less prior knowledge of concepts related to phonemic sensitivity, letter knowledge, print awareness, the purposes of reading, and general verbal skills and vocabulary. Children raised in poverty, youngsters with limited proficiency in English, children with speech and hearing impairments, and children from homes where the parent's reading levels are low are clearly at increased risk of reading failure. Recent research has identified and replicated findings which point to at least four factors that hinder reading development among children irrespective of their environmental, socioeconomic, ethnic, and biological factors. These four factors include deficits in phoneme awareness and developing the alphabetic principle, deficits in acquiring reading comprehension strategies and applying them to the reading of text, deficits in developing and maintaining the motivation to learn to read, and limitations in effectively preparing teachers.

**How can we help children to read?**

Learning to read is a lengthy and difficult process for many children, and success is based in large part on developing language and literacy-related skills very early in life. A massive effort needs to be undertaken to inform parents, and the educational and medical communities of the need to involve children in reading from the first days of life; to engage children in playing with language through nursery rhymes, storybooks, and writing activities; and to bring to children experiences that help them understand the purposes of reading, and the joy that can be derived from it. Parents must become intimately aware of the importance of vocabulary development and the use of verbal interactions with their youngsters to enhance grammar, syntax, and verbal reasoning.

- Young preschool children should be encouraged to learn the letters of the alphabet, to discriminate letters from one another, to print letters, and to attempt to spell words that they hear.
- Reading out loud to children is a proven activity for developing vocabulary growth and language expansion, and plays a causal role in developing both receptive and expressive language capabilities.
- Procedures with good accuracy now exist to identify children at risk of reading failure. This information needs to be widely disseminated to schools, teachers, and parents so that early identification and intervention can take place.
- Kindergarten should be designed so that all children will develop the prerequisite phonological, vocabulary, and early reading skills necessary for success in the first grade.
- Beginning reading programs should be constructed to ensure that adequate instructional time be allotted to the teaching of phonemic awareness skills, phonics skills, the development of spelling and orthographic skills, the development of reading fluency and automaticity, and the development of reading comprehension strategies. For children demonstrating difficulty in learning to read, each of these components must be taught in an integrated context and that ample practice in reading familiar material be afforded.
- Strong competency-based training programs with formal board certification for teachers of reading should be developed.
- A formal procedure needs to be developed to assess the current status of scientific research-based knowledge relevant to reading development, reading disorders, and the effectiveness of various approaches to teaching children to read and to develop strategies for rapid dissemination of this information to facilitate teacher preparation and effective reading instruction in our nation's schools.

For more information please contact Reid Lyon at (301) 496–9849. ◆

# Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young Children

**Susan Burns**
National Research Council

The Committee on Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young children is conducting a study of the comparative effectiveness of interventions for young children who are at risk of having problems learning to read. The goals of the project are three: (1) to comprehend a rich but fragmented research base; (2) to translate the research findings into advice and guidance for parents, educators, publishers, and others involved in the care and instruction of the young; and (3) to convey this advice to the targeted audiences through a variety of publications, conferences, and other outreach activities.

The committee will:

- Synthesize the research on reading from relevant scholarship in cognitive science, developmental psychology, and related fields.
- Review and synthesize research on factors associated with reading difficulties stemming from cognitive, perceptual, neurological, and environmental causes.
- Evaluate and compare the effectiveness of existing modes of prevention, program intervention, and instruction for the various populations of children at risk of reading failure, and characterize a range of successful interventions.
- Highlight the strengths and limitations of specific interventions for particular groups of children, including those with cognitive or neurological deficiencies; those from impoverished environments or from a distinct subculture.
- Highlight effective organizational structures, capacity-building strategies, support systems, and learning environments that are conducive to good instructional practice, proper diagnosis, and effective interventions for children at risk of reading problems.
- Highlight key research findings that should be integrated into existing and future program interventions to enhance the reading abilities of young children, particularly instruction at the preschool and early elementary levels.
- Draw out the major policy implications of the research findings in such areas as prevention, inclusion, and categorical programs.

For more information please contact Susan Burns at (202) 334–3462. ◆

# Even Start Evaluation

**Patricia McKee**
**Tracy Rimdzius**
U.S. Department of Education

The purpose of the Even Start program is to help break the cycle of intergenerational illiteracy by improving the educational opportunities of the nation's low-income families. Even Start funds family-centered projects to help parents improve their literacy and parenting skills, and assist children in reaching their full potential as learners. At least one parent and child from each family must participate together in the Even Start program. Eligible families have an adult who is eligible for an adult basic education program under the Adult Education Act or within the state's compulsory school attendance age range, and a child between the ages of birth and seven.

The Even Start Program is undergoing extensive evaluation. The first four-year National Even Start Evaluation covered program years 1989–90 to 1992–93 and the final report was released in January of 1995. Two other evaluations are currently underway. The second national evaluation covers program years 1993–94 to 1996–97 and the interim report on year 1994–95 has been released; a report for 1995–96 is expected in winter 1998, and data on the 1996-97 year are being collected. The third national evaluation contract award process is underway. The evaluation will cover years 1997–97 to 2000–01.

In addition to these national evaluations, Policy Studies Associates has just been awarded a contract for an Observational Study of well implemented Even Start programs. The final report of this study is due to the Department of Education by May 2000. A report on Even Start programs serving infants and toddlers is due in Fall 1997. Finally, two small studies are underway: one is a study of how Even Start can provide continuity for families with young children in making transitions from home to preschool and preschool to school. The second study will synthesize research in Even Start and Family Literacy Programs. This project's purpose is to gather the information on what is known about family literacy and its results for participants, both short- and long-term. This project will examine all research pertaining to family literacy programs, including but not limited to Even Start studies sponsored by the Department. From this review, it will extract and synthesize findings from high-quality studies to report on the operations and impact of family literacy projects across various providers. This will also include a synthesis of high quality state and local Even Start evaluations.

Data for 1995–96 from the Second National Even Start Evaluation show that:

**Population Served**

- Approximately 31,500 families comprised of 36,400 parents and 47,800 children, participated.
- The average Even Start family has 5.5 members and over 80 percent of families had an annual income of under $15,000. About 42 percent had incomes under $6,000.

*(Continued on pg. 7)*

*Evaluation (Continued from pg. 6)*

- At intake, the vast majority of Even Start parents had not completed high school nor earned a GED. The highest grade completed for 30 percent of the 1995–96 enrollees was between seventh and ninth grades. Counting the 2 percent of parents with no formal schooling, the percentage of new enrolless who have not progressed beyond the primary grades is 15 percent.
- Since the First National Even Start Evaluation, projects have improved their ability to retain families—approximately 60 percent of families continue participating in the second year of the program—and to provide intensive services.

**Outcomes**

- Children in both the First and the Second National Evaluation achieved significant gains on the PreSchool Inventory (PSI), a test of school readiness skills (one standard deviation in a 6-month period).
- Even Start children also made significant gains on the Preschool Language Scale-3(PLS-3), used to measure language development (one half a standard deviation in a 6 month period).
- Adults stay longer in Even Start than they do in adult only programs; hence, the outcomes are stronger.
- Adults made significant gains on the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) and the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE). Approximately 10 percent of the adults attained a GED certificate while participating in Even Start.

Even Start families made modest but significant gains on the HOME Screening Questionnaire (HSQ) which measures the quality of cognitive stimulation and emotional support provided to the child by the family. While the evaluation does not include a control group, a control group of low-income families participating in a national evaluation of another federally-funded "two-generational, family support" program showed no change in HSQ scores over time. This suggests that the improvements seen among Even Start families are due to the Even Start program rather than other factors.

For more information about any of the Even Start Evaluations, please contact Tracy Rimdzius at (202) 401–1259. ◆

# Disability Reading Research Benefits All Young Children

**Gaile Houle**
U.S. Department of Education
Office of Special and Rehabilitative Services

Literacy development is the most critical academic task of a child's primary years. The importance of pre-reading and reading skills cannot be overstated. Research and demonstration projects, funded through the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) provide families and teachers of young children with language-learning disabilities and young children in general with the tools to enhance their child's literacy development.

The President's America Reads Challenge can provide effective intervention for all children, including children with disabilities. This is best accomplished through research-based models of intervention implemented by knowledgeable, caring adults. For young children with language-learning disabilities and young children at-risk for early reading difficulty, the process begins most effectively at an early age, with refined assessments. Specialized assessments are capable of identifying a child's development of the skills correlated with reading achievement in the primary grades.

From 1988 to 1994, OSEP funded an investigation of strategies for successful transition and inclusion of children with disabilities as they approached early elementary school-age. In one study, Catts (1993) conducted a longitudinal investigation of the relationship between speech-language impairments and reading disabilities. Certain speech-language abilities were related to early reading achievement. Phonological processing abilities, such as sound deletion and blending tasks, proved to be the best predictors of reading outcomes measured through word recognition. This relationship has been documented in studies involving children not identified as disabled (Catts, 1989). As children progress through the primary grades, and reading emphasis moves from word recognition to more complex comprehension tasks, receptive language skills become important for reading success.

Several outstanding OSEP model demonstration projects address the development of reading skills for young children with disabilities. At the Washington Research Institute, Notari, et.al., (1996) have developed and field-tested an emergent literacy curriculum for preschoolers. *Ladders to Literacy* incorporates metaphonological activities, print-awareness activities, and oral language development. The result is a successful program of phonological and pre-literacy skill development using "child-friendly" activities.

In the progression from sound research to best practice, it is important to note that with any innovative practice, implementation and knowledge utilization are critical steps that lead to children's success. Fuch and Fuch (in press) studied the implementation of new research-based practices. They confirm that teachers are more likely to use methods that enhance learning for most of the children in a classroom, not only children with disabilities. To that end, curricula such as *Ladders to Literacy* will have the strongest likelihood of completing the research-to-implementation cycle and enhancing reading skills for all young children.

For more information, please contact Gaile Houle at (202) 205-9045. ◆

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# Native Language Literacy: Is It Just Another Option?

**Kris Anstrom**
National Clearinghouse for
Bilingual Education

Planning for effective literacy development for limited English proficient children entails an understanding of the role native language has to play in the development of a second language, and more importantly, in the overall cognitive development of the child. Frequently, teachers, administrators, and others involved with the education of these young language minority children have equated their emergent literacy development with English language literacy development in the belief that children with English literacy skills will be better prepared for school. Such beliefs have resulted in policies detrimental to language minority children and their families (Prince and Lawrence, 1993). These policies have advocated for English-only approaches in early childhood programs, approaches which are often detrimental to the continued cognitive and linguistic development of the child.

### Native Language Literacy: Not Just an Option

Proponents of English-only approaches for early childhood programs justify them based on two erroneous claims: first, that English-only instruction will best prepare these children for the demands of the predominantly English-speaking school environments they will be entering; and secondly, that very young children are better language learners than older children and adults. However, research on language and literacy development in language minority children does not support either claim. A number of studies have determined that cognitive and academic development in the first language has a vital and positive effect on second language schooling. Literacy development, concept formation, and subject knowledge developed in the first language will all transfer to the second language. Furthermore, research indicates that if children do not reach a certain threshold in their first language, including literacy, they may experience cognitive difficulties in the second language (Collier, 1995).

Additional research also disputes the claim that very young children are better language learners. They may achieve a superficial fluency in the second language rather quickly, but without a strong cognitive base in their first language, these children will tend to take much longer to acquire cognitive academic language skills (i.e., the language necessary to speak, listen, read, and write in an academic environment) in the second language (Ramirez et.al, 1991). A third concern, voiced in Wong Fillmore's research (1992), is that in very young children English can begin to replace the first language, especially in the United States where minority languages are not highly valued and where strong emphasis is placed on assimilation. Such an occurrence can have a profound effect on the child's relationship with his or her parents and language community. However, Wong Fillmore does not suggest abandoning English language programming for these students; rather, she states that the issue is timing. "The children have to learn English, but they should not be required to do so until their native languages are stable enough to handle the inevitable encounter with English and all it means" (Wong Fillmore, 1992).

### Native Language Literacy in Early Childhood Settings

The optimal environment for supporting native language literacy development in young language minority children necessitates that the teacher or caregiver use the child's language, thus ensuring a match between school and home. In order to develop linguistically, cognitively and socially, the child must be exposed to the native language in numerous environments—home, school, and community. This layering effect provides children with a rich language environment in which they will encounter a variety of vocabulary, grammatical constructions, ideas and concepts, all of which are important precursors to literacy development (Kagan and Garcia, 1991).

A language rich environment in a school or caregiving setting can involve many of the same methods and materials through which English language literacy is encouraged, only the non-English language becomes the medium. Thus books, tapes, videos, puzzles, posters, and other materials should be provided in the native language. Children should be encouraged to use the native language to communicate with others, to tell stories, to make up rhymes, to label drawings, and to use books as resources. The teacher or caregiver should encourage children to expand their vocabulary, to increase the grammatical complexity of their utterances, and to improve their pronunciation. Particular emphasis should be given to incorporating materials and practices that are culturally relevant for the language minority children in question.

### When the Teacher Doesn't Speak the Native Language

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) recently published their position statement, *Responding to Linguistic and Cultural Diversity: Recommendations for Effective Early Childhood Education* (1995). Though not specifically concerned with literacy, the statement's recommendations provide a framework for the type of environment early childhood settings for language minority students should strive for. The NAEYC statement also offers several suggestions for situations where the teacher or caregiver does not speak the non-English language or where children speak many different languages. In these cases, materials, such as signs, books, tapes, and posters in those language(s) should be provided. Parents and others who speak the native languages can be encouraged to volunteer on a regular basis. Teachers should also learn a few words or phrases of the children's language(s); by so doing, the teacher affirms the children's language and culture. The teacher can model correct English while also allowing language minority students to respond in their native language and to use this language with their native-language peers in learning activities (NAEYC, 1995).

### Incorporating the Home Culture

A final and vital component of language minority children's literacy development is the role the parents and home environment play. The early childhood

period is when parents and the home environment exert the most influence on children; thus, parents must become partners in their children's education. When discrepancies exist between the culture of the home and the school, teachers need to create ways to bridge this gap (Villarruel et.al., 1995). A first step is to learn about the home cultures of their language minority children. In keeping with Luis Moll's "Funds of Knowledge" paradigm (1990), teachers can design innovative approaches to literacy development that are culturally and linguistically compatible with the background of language minority students.

One example of an approach to literacy development that incorporates the students' culture is the Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP) in Hawaii. In order to address issues surrounding Hawaiian children's low achievement, a home culture communication feature was introduced into literacy development lessons. Rather than traditional story discussion methods, Hawaiian story talk was used. In story talk two or more children co-narrate. Such co-narration involves turn taking, joint performance and cooperative production of a response. Story talk is more than just a means of conveying information; it also supports the relationship between the narrators, and in a larger sense links school learning with the home culture (Grant, 1995).

In light of President Clinton's recent challenge to ensure that every child can read independently and well by the end of third grade, those involved in the education of young language minority children must provide the literacy learning opportunities that these children need to achieve this goal. Encouraging native language literacy development in conjunction with the use of culturally relevant practices based on a sound understanding of the home culture help give language minority children an equitable and appropriate learning environment for meeting President Clinton's challenge.

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**About NCBE**

The National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education (NCBE), operated by The George Washington University, Center for the Study of Language and Education, is funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA) to collect, analyze, and disseminate information relating to the effective education of linguistically and culturally diverse learners in the U.S. NCBE provides information through its World Wide Web server, produces a weekly e-mail news bulletin, *Newsline*, and manages a topical electronic discussion group, *NCBE Roundtable.*


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# Boston University and Chelsea Public Schools Home School Portfolio Project

**Jeanne R. Paratore**
Boston University

**Barbara Krol-Sinclair**
Chelsea Public Schools

Claire Zapathka and Criselda Saladin and daughter Grace Marie Agosto of the Home School Portfolio Project.

Despite consensus that parents are essential to children's early learning, questions remain about how to establish collaborative relationships between parents and teachers. These problems are accentuated with immigrant families, when the culture of the home may be very different from the culture of the school. Recent research shows that children from families who are linguistically and culturally different from the mainstream engage in rich and important literacy practices at home. Too often these literacy activities are either unfamiliar to, or go unrecognized by, the children's early childhood and elementary school teachers. As a consequence, these children are often perceived as entering school with literacy and language deficits and their parents are often thought to be disengaged or disinterested in their children's schooling.

The Boston University/Chelsea Public Schools Early Childhood Home-School Portfolio Project was designed to create a bridge between children's home and school by providing immigrant parents with a systematic way to document their children's home literacy experiences. In addition, it engages parents and teachers in conversations about children's literacy learning at home and at school.

The project has three core activities: (1) during family literacy classes, parents share the ways they promote the learning of language, reading and writing at home, discuss new ways to share such with their children, and learn to document their children's uses of emergent reading and writing in a family literacy portfolio; (2) during after-school seminars, early childhood and primary-grade classroom teachers explore the ways families use literacy in the course of every day activities and ways to build on family routines to support children's emergent language development and learning in school; (3) during parent-teacher conferences, parents and teachers exchange children's home and school literacy portfolios as a way for each to learn about how children use literacy at home and at school.

During the first year of this three-year project, 30 parent-teacher dyads participated in these activities. Using parent and teacher questionnaires with all 30 dyads, a series of three in-depth interviews with a random sampling of ten dyads, and audiotapes of two parent-teacher conferences for each of the dyads, we are examining the results. First, what influence do the project activities have on parents' beliefs and understandings about their role in schools? In addition, we are examining teachers' beliefs and understandings about the role that parents play in their children's schooling; changes in parent-teacher interactions; and changes in teacher-child interactions. While data are now being fully prepared and analyzed, an examination of partial data sets suggests some encouraging preliminary findings:

- Teachers were surprised at the quality and range of literacy activities children engaged in at home on their own and with family members.
- In some cases, teachers observed that children were doing academically more advanced work at home, and they revised classroom instruction accordingly.
- In some cases, teachers adapted innovative activities that parents had used with their children at home for use in the classroom.
- Parents said that the family literacy portfolio increased the amount of literacy activities in which children were engaged.
- In some cases, the portfolios provided evidence that recommendations made by teachers had been incorporated within the family's daily routines.
- Parents and teachers agreed that the family literacy portfolio improved their interaction during the parent-teacher conference. After using the portfolio as the basis for parent-teacher conference, one teacher described it as "the best conference I ever had."

During the second year of this three-year project, we will continue the same activities. Many of the teachers and parents who participated during the first year have asked to continue to participate in the project. In addition, we will add 30 new parent-teacher dyads and continue to collect data in the same ways.

For more information on the Boston University/Chelsea Public Schools Home School Portfolio Project please contact Jeanne Paratore at (617) 353-3285. ◆

# Field-Initiated Studies Grants Awarded

**Veda Bright**
U.S. Department of Education
National Institute on Early Childhood
Development and Education

The National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education within the Office of Educational Research and Improvement has funded six new Field-Initiated Studies grants totalling approximately $1.059 million for the first year. Projects last up to three years. Selected from 104 proposals, the grantees and their projects are:

**Regents of the University of California**—*Assessing Low-income Children's Changing Environments and Effects on School Readiness.* The University of California is tracking at least 250 mothers with preschool-age children who receive welfare in two impoverished communities in Tampa, Florida. The study will assess changes in developmentally relevant facets of the home environment and in non-parental child care and preschool settings during welfare reform implementation. The study investigates how early learning settings of young children already at risk of school failure may be reshaped by welfare reform and the ongoing devolution of public early childhood support. It empirically examines how variability in neighborhoods, especially their early care and education infrastructures, may condition parents' decisions and effects on children's early learning and school readiness.

*Project Director: Bruce Fuller*

**The Media Group of Connecticut**—*Parenting Through Play for School Readiness.* This project proposes to improve early childhood learning by fully applying video, text, graphics, and online media to develop an empirically-tested, low-cost, easily replicable program to train parents and caregivers of low-income preschoolers. The goal is to foster children's ready-to-learn skills. The project will develop, test, refine, and nationally disseminate a video-based program for use in training low-income parents and other caregivers. The video will engage 3-5 year-old children from low-income families in play techniques which research has shown to enhance children's key cognitive, social and motor skills for school readiness. Once a statistical analysis demonstrates effectiveness, 2500 copies of the complete video-based training program will be distributed nationally. An online web site will be established and a national evaluation will be conducted. By disseminating free copies of an empirically-tested training video, and the accompanying printed manual, the project will help to train large numbers of parents and caregivers in simple, effective techniques to improve low-income children's school-readiness skills.

*Project Director: Harvey Bellin*

**University of Colorado Health Sciences Center**—*Home Activity and Play Intervention.*

The University of Colorado Health Sciences Center in collaboration with the University of Denver, will develop, implement, and evaluate an early intervention service that: facilitates young children's developmental progress and intellectual growth through play and family routines, and increases parental involvement in their children's learning. This project will playfully integrate into the child and family's typical daily routines interventions which are based upon functional goals. In this project, at least 54 children and families will receive intervention through the Home Activity and Play Intervention (HAPI) model. Entry and exit data will be collected and compared to a contrast group of 54 children who will receive intervention through currently existing services. It is expected that the HAPI group will show increases in child developmental gains and functioning, successful incorporation of interventions into the family's daily routines and increased satisfaction on the part of parents.

*Project Director: Cordelia Robinson*

**University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**—*Engagement as an Outcome of Program Quality.* The University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill is studying 68 infants and toddlers and 68 preschoolers who attend child care centers in central North Carolina for an average of at least six hours a day. The study is measuring relationships among child age, temperament, child engagement, home environment, socioeconomic status, child care center classroom quality, and children's developmental outcomes. The purpose is to understand the relationships between child care quality and how children spend their time in child care centers, how quality mediates the effects of child and family variables on child outcomes, and how engagement moderates the effects of quality on child outcomes. The study is based on the premise that child engagement, (i.e., the amount of time children spend actively involved with adults, other children, and materials) is useful for determining the impact of different levels of child care quality. Increased understanding about engagement is expected to contribute to theory and knowledge in the area of child care quality, since it provides a basis for looking at what children do in child care settings.

*Project Director: R.A. McWilliam*

**Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service**—*The Effects of Discrepancies in School Readiness Expectations on Young Children Living in Poverty.* Universal school readiness has been embraced as a national education goal. While experts debate what school readiness is and how it should be assessed, parents, preschool and kindergarten teachers put into daily practice their explicit and implicit expectations regarding the attitudes and attributes children need to be ready to succeed in school. Unfortunately, there is little communication among them, and research suggests there are disparities in their readiness expectations. To build a common vision of readiness and strengthen connections between families, preschools and schools that ease children's transition to school and promote school readiness, communities need to better understand the impact of these diverse expectations on young children, particularly in high poverty areas. This study addresses these issues by adopting a collaborative, community-based approach to studying the impact of discrepancies in the readiness expectations of parents, preschool teachers, and kindergarten teachers on children's transition to kindergarten and on their kindergarten teachers' ratings of their school readiness. Data will be gathered from the parents, preschool teachers, and kindergarten teachers of 85 randomly selected ethnically diverse preschool children who attended a Head Start program and are now entering kindergarten in two high-poverty school districts in New York City. Results will inform the national dialogue on school readiness by highlighting its ecological context.

*Project Director: Dr. Chaya S. Piotrkowski*

**Arizona State University and Southwest Human Development**—*Promoting Children's Language Development in Head Start Classrooms: Explorations with Collaborative Research Teams.* This study is a collaborative effort between Arizona State University's Infant-Child Communication Research Programs and Southwest Human Development. The latter is a private, non-profit agency that provides comprehensive services, including Head Start, to young children and their families. The overall purpose of the project is to develop and evaluate a full partnership, research-to-practice model designed to facilitate the integration of validated language enhancement strategies into preschool children's everyday environments. Collaborative research partnerships will be formed with the parents, Head Start teachers, aides, and university researchers. The objectives of the research are to: (a) promote Head Start children's language development, with an emphasis on beginning school with essential language-based learning strategies; (b) link Head Start classroom practices with the children's homes; and (c) investigate the effectiveness of the collaborative research teams.

*Project Director: Jeanne Wilcox* ◆

# Between the Lions

**Susan Petroff**
Corporation for Public Broadcasting

The U.S. Department of Education's National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education, through a grant to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, is helping to fund a major new literacy initiative for young readers. The centerpiece of this initiative is *Between the Lions*, a music-, book-, and print-filled television series, which stars two lions who guard the entrance to a magical library. *Between the Lions* is produced by WGBH/Boston and Sirius Thinking, Ltd. The show will employ a state-of-the-art curriculum consisting of a mix of phonemic awareness and whole language skills and is targeted to beginning readers aged four to seven. Literacy specialists helped to design the curriculum, following a 3-day literacy "summit" held at WGBH. Once characters and segments have been designed and scripted, formative testing will be used to help determine their appeal and efficacy as teaching tools.

The half-hour television series, which will air daily on PBS beginning in the 1999–2000 broadcast season, will help launch a multiple-media "Virtual Classroom" that will grow to include basal readers, CD-Roms, trade books, teacher training tapes, videos for parents, web sites, and a nationwide "Read to Children!" campaign. Founding Partners for *Between the Lions*—many of whom will collaborate with the producers on series-related reading projects—include the American Library Association, Reading is Fundamental (RIF), and the Library of Congress, Center for the Book.

As research for *Sesame Street, The Electric Company,* and *Reading Rainbow* has proven, children do learn from what they see on TV. High-quality, educational television has been shown to increase children's vocabulary, to result in more reading and increased library visitation, and to teach letters, numbers, and other key emergent-literacy skills. *Between the Lions* will pick up where series like *Sesame Street* leave off. By taking a systematic, comprehensive approach to showing young children how and why to read and write. Once the series is on the air, rigorous testing will help ascertain the series' success in teaching letter-sound correspondences, sight word recognition, and other decoding and comprehension strategies. ◆

# Children's Learning and the Arts Task Force Birth to Age Eight

**Sara Goldhawk**
Goals 2000 Arts Education Partnership

The Goals 2000 Arts Education Partnership has created a Task Force on Children's Learning and the Arts: Birth to Age Eight to explore the role of the arts in developmentally appropriate learning experiences of young children and the effect on their cognitive and affective development.

The Arts Education Partnership was formed in 1995 through a cooperative agreement between the National Endowment for the Arts, the U.S. Department of Education, the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, and the Council of Chief State School Officers. Over 100 national organizations committed to promoting arts education in elementary and secondary schools throughout the country have joined the Partnership to help states and local school districts tap the resources available through the Goals 2000 legislation.

The new Task Force met for the first time on June 26, 1997 to begin the work of using the Arts Education Partnership to reach the national goal of seeing that "All children in America will start school ready to learn." In addition, U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley has asked the Partnership to assist and advise the Department in implementing the *America Reads Challenge*. The goal of the *Challenge* is to help all children learn to read independently by the end of the third grade. The Task Force will explore the specific assistance Partnership organizations can provide to the achievement of the *Challenge*.

The Task Force identified the following as the focus of their work:

- identifying the role and best practices of the arts in assisting the work of the U.S. Department of Education's *America Reads Challenge*;
- identifying best practices in using the arts in children's learning including practices for educators, parents and other care givers; and
- identifying, stimulating, and disseminating research on the arts in children's learning.

The Task Force plans to publish a position statement on the role of the arts in the learning and development of children through grade three. It also will develop a database of current research, model programs and best practices, organization, materials, and resources related to the topic. A set of recommendations for addressing gaps in these areas will be developed. The role of the arts in literacy development will be a focus of the database. The Task Force will publish alerts to Partnership organizations on the opportunities for arts education presented by the *America Reads Challenge* legislation and activities.

Task Force meetings are open to all participating organizations. Organizations that wish to participated should contact:

Task Force on Children's Learning and the Arts: Birth to Age Eight
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Suite 700
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Early Childhood Research Working Group

# Early Childhood UPDATE

Summer 1998

***From the Desk of Naomi Karp***

It has been two and half years since the reauthorization of the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement and the creation of the National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education (ECI). Until 1995, the U.S. Department of Education did not concentrate research resources to improve the learning and development of very young children with the exception of special programs for children with disabilities.

A lot has changed since then. Recent developments in brain imaging and neuroscience research have reached the public's awareness. There have been two White House conferences on young children—the White House Conference on Early Brain Development, and this year's White House Conference on Child Care. Multiple media campaigns have also made the public realize what we have known all along—that children learn and develop from the very beginning and that quality early experiences are critical to children's life outcomes.

When I started in this job, the Early Childhood Institute was the new kid on the block. Services for young children were—and still are—spread throughout the federal government. There are more than 9 federal departments and 35 agencies who work on issues relating to children from birth through age 8. Therefore, we established the Early Childhood Research Working Group to bring us all together—to share information on common issues and concerns so that all of our work is more effective. We have successfully conducted more than 12 seminars, produced 5 newsletters, and continue to form networks and improve working relationships among and between agencies. As a result of our meetings, several agencies have put into place formal interagency agreements.

The public's attention is finally focused on issues relating to young children. We need to take advantage of this window of opportunity to work together to flush out the relevant research questions, find answers to important questions, impact policy decisions, and make a positive impact on the lives of young children. ■

## Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods

**Felton Earls**
Harvard School of Public Health

The Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods is a major, interdisciplinary study aimed at deepening society's understanding of the causes and pathways of juvenile delinquency, adult crime, substance abuse, and violence. Based in Chicago and directed from the Harvard School of Public Health in Boston, the Project brings together scientists from a wide range of disciplines and institutions across the country. It is funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the National Institute of Justice, the National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education in the U.S. Department of Education, and the National Institute of Mental Health in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

From 1994 until the year 2002 the Project will follow 6,000 individuals and 80 communities in a coordinated effort to study the intricate pathways of social competence and antisocial behavior.

The Project is unique in both size and scope, combining two studies into a single, comprehensive design. The first is an intensive study of Chicago's neighborhoods—their social, economic, organizational, political, and cultural structures, and the dynamic changes that take place in these structures over the study's 8 years. Researchers hope to find out why some communities have a high rate of crime, violence, and substance abuse, while similar communities nearby are relatively safe.

The study is looking not only at how individuals shape their environments, but how their changing social and physical environments shape them. Therefore, the second part is a series of coordinated longitudinal studies that will follow 6,000 randomly selected children, adolescents, and young adults, looking at the changing circumstances of their lives as well as the personal characteristics that may lead them toward or away from a variety of antisocial behaviors. What factors enable some individuals to live successful, productive lives, even in high-risk neighborhoods? Why does one young person experiment only briefly with delinquency, while another goes on to a "criminal career"?

By looking at individuals and their communities—and individuals in their communities—as both change over time, the Project seeks to unravel the complex influences of community, family, and individual factors on human development.

*(Continued on page 12)*



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# African-American Children's Development in Violent Neighborhoods: The Influences of Family, School, and Community

**Suzanne M. Randolph, Sally Koblinsky, and Debra Roberts**
Department of Family Studies
University of Maryland at College Park

Although educators recognize the potential negative effects of community violence, there has been little empirical research examining ways in which schools and parents can effectively reduce the stress that violence imposes on young children. This study examines the effects of neighborhood violence on preschoolers, the role of family and schools in reducing its impact, and the effectiveness of early childhood antiviolence interventions. This study is determining the effects of exposure to community violence on preschoolers' cognitive, motor, and socioemotional development.

Ramsey Lowery (age 3) and Quincey Lowery (age 4) affiliated with the University of Maryland's Program: Children's Development in Violent Neighborhoods.

## The Problem

Exposure to pervasive community violence can jeopardize preschool children's ability to learn and succeed in school (Gouvis 1995). Exposure to violence may undermine young children's development and security, autonomy, competence, and self-esteem, and trigger dysfunctional coping responses. Children may come to mistrust their parents and teachers, whom they perceive as being unable to protect them, and develop aggressive, impulsive, self-protective behaviors. Such behaviors may keep young children from developing such values as cooperation, empathy, and sensitivity. Moreover, children's preoccupation with violent events may distract them from learning and limit their ability to develop the direction and self-control they will need for school achievement (Slaby, Roedell, Arezzo, & Hendrix 1995).

This 3-year study conducted by the Department of Family Studies at the University of Maryland at College Park is funded by the U.S. Department of Education's National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education. The study will advance theory and knowledge of how young children are influenced by and protected from, community violence. The study is seeking to develop and empirically test an educational intervention designed to promote positive developmental outcomes for African-American preschoolers in violent neighborhoods.

## Preliminary Findings

The goal for the first year of the study was to collect data on children and their families who live in neighborhoods with high- and low-levels of violence. These data will look at the differential effects of both exposure to violence and on different child rearing practices used by parents. The sample included 104 African-American mothers and their preschool children (approximately equal boys and girls) in Head Start centers in Washington, DC and a suburban Maryland community. Approximately half of the children attended centers in neighborhoods with a high incidence of violence. Most of the mothers were single, unemployed, and had at least a high school education. Mothers did not vary by neighborhood on education, family structure, marital status, father's presence, and employment status. However, mothers in the neighborhoods with high rates of violence had lived in their neighborhoods twice as long as mothers in neighborhoods with low violence.

### *Parents' and Children's Exposure to Violence*

Compared to mothers in neighborhoods with low violence, mothers in highly violent neighborhoods report that: they and their children were more likely to have heard gun shots; they are less likely to perceive the police as powerful in protecting them from community violence; and they are less likely to perceive themselves as extremely powerful in protecting their family. However mothers in highly violent neighborhoods were less depressed and more consistent in their child rearing practices related to potential violence exposure than mothers in low violence neighborhoods. Mothers in both groups felt safe walking alone in their neighborhoods in the evening.

### *Effects of Violence on Children*

Boys were twice as likely as girls to be reported by parents as having internalizing problems such as withdrawal. However, about one-fourth of both boys and girls were reported as displaying externalizing behaviors such as acting out. There were no differences by level of community violence.

*(Continued on page 3)*

*African-American (Continued from page 2)*

*Mothers Strategies to Protect Children from Violence*

The study found that mothers did not vary by neighborhood on most of the child-rearing practices. The most common strategies reported included: providing constant close physical supervision; teaching practical household safety skills; telling children to tell their teachers; and teaching children to forgive and forget. Mothers in high violence neighborhoods reported less frequently that they teach children to forgive and forget. Moreover, mothers in high violence neighborhoods were less likely than those in low violence areas to report that they keep their children inside when not in school to avoid community violence.

**Lessons Learned**

Lessons that were learned during the first year of the project include:

*Developing Operational Definitions*

Both objective (Uniform Crime Reports) and subjective (participants' perceptions) indicators of "high" and "low" violence are needed. Mothers in high violence areas view their communities as very safe. Many mothers in the low violence neighborhoods also reported exposure to violence. Therefore, mothers in low violence neighborhoods may also need intervention strategies to help their children with issues dealing with community violence.

The concept of community should take into account such things as parents' views of what constitutes the "neighborhood." Objective boundaries such as Census Tracts may fail to capture the differential effects of these perceptions.

*Characterizing Children's Violence Exposure*

Children's exposure to community violence is often reported through the lens of their parent. Future research should consider measures appropriate for the age and developmental level of the child that may be more representative of the child's exposure as witness, victim, or perpetrator (e.g., fighting, bullying, or chasing). These exposures may not be readily known to parents. Previous research has shown, for example, that teachers hear children discuss guns, see them act out robberies and shootings, and have observed children playing a game called "funeral" in their classrooms.

*Unraveling the Complex Nature of People's Lives*

There may be other variables in the families' worlds that influence their ability to protect children or that place children at risk for harm from community violence. For example, the mothers in high violence neighborhoods have lived in their communities twice as long as mothers in low violence neighborhoods. Over time, mothers may learn to cope, devise strategies, and have other adults on whom they rely, or become more consistent in their parenting roles.

Very little attention is given to the strengths in high risk communities. The study found that mothers in high violence neighborhoods were less depressed and more consistent in parenting than mothers in less violence neighborhoods. These mothers may possess strengths that could be built upon to develop intervention strategies.

*Understanding the Role of Culture in This Area of Research*

Little is known about the role of culture in this area of research. Several strengths that protect individuals and families from potential adversity have been noted in African-American communities. These strengths include: access and use of informal support networks, spirituality, involvement of kin and nonkin extended family systems, family rituals and routines, and an emphasis on communalism. In the case of violence, research should address the question, "Are these strengths part of the 'adaptive culture' that develops in response to protecting young children and ensuring that their developmental competencies are not compromised?"

**Implications for Research**

Second year activities are using these lessons learned in the following ways:

Exploring alternative ways of defining "high" and "low" violence, by combining objective data with maternal reports of exposure. The study will conduct qualitative research to guide the development of culturally specific measures and procedures which will be piloted later in year 2 and tested in year 3. In parent focus groups in high violence areas, mothers discuss how they define their neighborhood ( e.g., what are the boundaries?), the nature of violence exposure for themselves and their children, strategies they use to help protect children from violence, and their awareness of community-level efforts to address the violence. Teachers discuss similar issues and also the potential role of the Head Start center in preparing children to deal with violence exposure in the community.

*Using qualitative research to investigate macro level variables.* Specifically, the study has developed a protocol based on rides through neighborhoods to observe and record the condition of available housing, police presence, nature of pedestrian traffic, quality of play areas, and other factors.

The goal of these qualitative research efforts is to develop criteria for selecting the family, school, and community variables to be explored in year 3 of the study. This information will be used to develop parent and teacher measures, and to develop a culturally-based intervention to be implemented and empirically tested in year 3.

**Conclusion**

Many urban families will continue to experience community violence in the near future. Researchers can play an important role in helping policymakers and educators design and evaluate interventions to promote positive developmental outcomes for children living in violent communities. However, conducting such research poses challenges that are multilevel and multidisciplinary. Collaborations that bring the researchers together with educators and community representatives hold the greatest promise for ensuring that interventions are culturally grounded and theory-based.

References in this article may be found in : Randolph, S.M., Koblinsky, S.A., and Roberts, D.R. (1996). Studying the role of family and school in the development of African-American preschoolers in violent neighborhoods. *Journal of Negro Education, 65(3), 282–294.*

For more information contact : Dr. Suzanne M. Randolph, University of Maryland, 1204 Marie Mount Hall, College Park, MD 20742; phone 301–405–4012, or e-mail: sr22@umail.umd.edu. ■

# A Head Start-University Research Partnership on Mental Health

**Cheryl A. Boyce**
Head Start Mental Health
Research Consortium

Research aimed at improving the quality of developmentally appropriate prevention and intervention services available to low-income children, family and staff served by Head Start programs will soon be developed and tested thanks to a new initiative establishing a consortium of mental health researchers. In September 1997, the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families (ACYF) and the National Institute on Mental Health (NIMH) awarded five research grants as the core component of a new, collaborative mental health research enterprise. Together, the grantees from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, University of New Mexico, University of Oregon, Vanderbilt University, and Columbia University, along with their Head Start program partners, federal staff and members of the research community, form the Head Start Mental Health Research Consortium (HSMHRC).

The HSMHRC consortium was designed to develop and test applications of theory-based research and state-of-the-art techniques for the prevention, identification, and treatment of children's mental health disorders within Head Start. The first year of the consortium has been dedicated to intensive planning and piloting which includes consultation, dissemination, and critical reviews of appropriate measurement tools and interventions for Head Start and other early childhood populations. The HSMHRC will conduct research in multiple Head Start communities that include white, African-American, Hispanic, and American Indian populations and rural and urban settings. Within these diverse Head Start communities, the HSMHRC aims to: (1) identify current mental health related services; (2) determine prevalence, type and severity of emotional, behavioral and language problems; and (3) assess the impact of home-based, classroom-based, and skills training interventions on emotional, behavioral, and language problems.

The consortium expects to increase the current level of understanding and improve the provision of high quality, comprehensive, culturally, and developmentally appropriate prevention and intervention services to young low-income children, families and staff served by Head Start programs across the country. The HSMHRC is also committed to dissemination of ethical, culturally sensitive, and developmentally appropriate assessment tools and prevention and intervention models to the Head Start community, research community, and practice field.

Head Start, along with pediatric primary health care providers, is a comprehensive service delivery program that serves as one of the earliest mechanisms for identification and intervention with a vulnerable population of children from low-income families. Head Start also serves as a national laboratory, which develops, demonstrates, and tests best practices based on scientifically sound research and encourages and supports both new research and the methods for conducting research.

ACYF also wishes to announce its continued commitment to supporting mental health in Head Start populations through another series of Head Start-University Partnership research grants which focus on mental health issues to be awarded in 1998; applications were due May 5, 1998 (Federal Register Program Announcement No. ACF/ACYF/HS-URP&RS98-1).

For more information on the HSMHRC, please contact any of the following: Cheryl Boyce, 301–443–5944; cboyce@nih.gov; Michael Lopez, 202–205–9632; milopez@acf.dhhs.gov; Kimberly Hoagwood, 301–480–3364, khoagwoo@nih.gov; Louisa Tarullo, 202–205–9632; Lbtarullo@acf.dhhs.gov; or Peter Jensen, 301–443–5944; pjensen@nih.gov. For more information on Head Start-University Partnership research grants, including an electronic copy of the new Program Announcement and other related Head Start research activities, please visit our Web site at: http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/hsb. ■

# The Collaborative Multimodal Treatment Study of Children With Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

**Benedetto Vitiella**
National Institute of Mental Health

The Collaborative Multimodal Treatment Study of Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is the first multisite large study of the long-term effectiveness of different treatments for children with ADHD. The study, sponsored by the National Institute of Mental Health and co-sponsored by several agencies, is run at 6 sites and has enrolled 579 children with ADHD, aged 7 to 9 years. Children have been randomized to receive one of the following: pharmacological treatment, psychosocial treatment, combined pharmacological and psychosocial, or treatment as usual in their community. Treatments were provided for 14 months. The data collection has been completed and the statistical analysis is in progress, so that results will be available in the next few months.

For more information, contact Benedetto Vitiella at 301–443–4383. ■

# Collaborative Service Delivery: A Process Evaluation of the Integrated Children and Family Services Initiative

**Roxane Kaufmann**
Georgetown University Child Development Center

Helping children ages birth through seven and their families who might be at risk of mental health and substance abuse problems is the goal of the Integrated Children and Family Services Initiative (ICFS) grants awarded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA) in the Fall of 1995. SAMHSA awarded supplemental funding to eight grantees with existing programs as part of a special initiative targeted at children ages birth to 7 years of age. Recipients included grantees of all three SAMHSA centers; the Centers for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse Prevention, and Substance Abuse Treatment, and are located in states across country.

The Integrated Children and Family Services Initiative (ICFS) grants, awarded for a 3 year period, were designed to: improve the quality and effectiveness of integrated mental health, and substance abuse prevention and treatment services for young children ages birth to 7 years and their families who are at risk: improve the current mental and social development of children ages birth to 7 years, and prevent potential substance abuse and other dysfunctions, and improve family functioning and well-being.

The ICFS initiative represents a commitment by SAMHSA to a comprehensive, multidisciplinary, collaborative approach to providing services for treatment and prevention to the child and all family members.

To build on the work done by SAMHSA, the National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education within the U.S. Department of Education, through an interagency agreement, has funded a study to examine the collaborative efforts and child outcome data collected from the supplemental grantees. This study is being conducted by Georgetown University Child Development Center and Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.

Children from the Parsons, Kansas Project Before, an affiliate of Georgetown University's Integrated Children and Family Services Initiative.

The process evaluation of the Integrated Child and Family Services initiative has two primary goals: to conduct multiday site visits with three of the eight supplemental SAMHSA grantees to learn from their attempt to integrate systems and services for young children and their families; and to synthesize available data from all eight grantees' evaluations that examine outcomes for children's early learning and development and family well-being.

For the site visits, two of which have been completed, one grantee from each of the three SAMHSA centers was selected. Intensive interviews were conducted with management level program staff, interagency collaborators, service providers, and family members receiving services in an effort to get multiple perspectives regarding collaborative efforts and service integration. SAMHSA and the National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education believe that there is much to learn about how collaboration is fostered and sustained at interagency and community levels, and that this information can inform others involved in implementing similar initiatives.

At this point, individual site visit reports are being written. Upon completion, a synthesis report focusing on the collaborative lessons learned around providing mental health and substance abuse services to children ages birth to seven and their families will be produced. This final report will highlight the successes sites are enjoying, as well as the challenges sites are facing as they continue to move toward integrated services. A study report, describing how the children and families benefited from this integrated service approach, will be released in the fall of 1999.

For more information, contact: Jim Griffin, 202-219-2168. ■

# Prenatal and Early Childhood Nurse Home Visitation Program

**David L. Olds, Ph.D.**
University of Colorado
Health Sciences Center

A program to help first-time, low-income mothers can have a positive impact on the mothers and their children for up to 15 years, according to a study conducted by the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, Cornell University, the University of Rochester, and the University of Denver and funded by National Institute of Mental Health's Division of Services and Intervention Research.

The Prenatal and Early Childhood Nurse Home Visitation Program is a well tested model for improving maternal and child health and functioning of low-income, first-time mothers and their babies. In the program, nurse home visitors work intensively with families to improve pregnancy outcomes by helping women improve their health behavior related to substance use, nutrition, and prompt-treatment of pregnancy complications; improve the child's health and development by promoting parents' responsible and competent care of their children; and improve parental life course, including preventing subsequent unintended pregnancy, completing education and finding work, and strengthening the family's formal and informal support systems.

The program has demonstrated its significant potential as a means of improving child health, preventing child abuse and neglect, reducing the length of time women receive public assistance, and reducing violence and criminality in young adults. Highlights of major findings on maternal and child outcomes from two randomized trials in Elmira, New York and Memphis, Tennessee show:

- Reduction of 25 percent in cigarette smoking during pregnancy among women who smoked cigarettes at registration.
- Fifty-six percent fewer hospital emergency room visits where child injuries were detected.
- Reduction of 75 percent in rates of child maltreatment among at-risk families from birth through the child's 15th year.
- Reduction of 43 percent in subsequent pregnancy among low-income, unmarried women by first child's 4th birthday. (Thirty-one percent reduction through age 15, with 2 years' greater interval between birth of first and second children).
- An increase of 83 percent in the rates of labor force participation by first child's 4th birthday.
- Thirty months reduction in Aid for Dependent Children (AFDC) utilization among low-income, unmarried women by first child's 15th birthday.
- Reduction of 44 percent in low-income, unmarried mothers' behavioral problems due to alcohol and drug abuse over the 15 years following program enrollment,.
- Sixty-nine percent fewer arrests among low-income, unmarried mothers over the 15 years following program enrollment.

The program is built upon a strong conceptual base that weaves together Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of human development, Bowlby's attachment theory, and Bandura's self-efficacy theory. Human ecology theory focuses the nurses' attention simultaneously on developing parents' individual, social, and material resources that influence the health and well-being of the family. Attachment theory emphasizes the importance of conducting the program through a stable, trusted relationship with a nurse who is committed to each family; and using the relationship between the nurse and parent as a tool for promoting parents' empathetic care of their children. Self-efficacy theory provides the underpinning for many of the specific clinical strategies the nurses use to help young parents develop the skills and motivation to succeed as individuals and in their roles as new parents.

The programmatic elements of the intervention have been refined over the past 20 years and detailed visit-by-visit protocols guide home visitors in their work with families. Strong supervision, training, and careful record-keeping support implementation of the model's key components.

Key program components include:

- Home visits begin during pregnancy and continue for 2 years after the child is born;
- The program targets first time mothers;
- Nurse home visitors follow a visitation schedule with weekly visits during the first month and during the first 6 weeks after delivery; visits every other week through the child's 21st month; and monthly visits until the child reaches age 2;
- Nurse home visitors work with families following the comprehensive focus of the program on personal health, environmental health, quality of care giving for the infant and toddler, maternal life course development, and family and friend support;
- The clinical processes are family-centered, protocol-driven, and directed toward nurturing family strengths and competencies;
- Nurse home visitors are expected to link families with the other health and human services they need;
- A full-time nurse home visitor should carry a caseload of no more than 25 families;
- A team of nurse home visitors should receive high quality weekly clinical nurse supervision;
- The program should be located in and operated by an organization with standing in its community; and
- Records need to be kept on families and their needs, services provided, and progress and outcomes realized.

For more information, contact Peggy Hill, Kempe Prevention Research Center for Family and Child Health, 1825 Marion Street, Denver, CO 80218 303-864-5207 or 5200 Hill.Peggy@tchden.org ■

# Preventive Intervention Research Studies for Families

**Philip A. Cowan, Ph.D.**
**Carolyn Papes Cowan, Ph.D.**
University of California at Berkeley

The University of California at Berkeley, with help from a National Institute of Mental Health grant, has been conducting two preventive intervention trials for two-parent families undergoing major family life transitions. The *Becoming a Family Project* looks at families as they make the transition to first-time parenthood, and the *School Children and their Families Project* follows the transition of the first child in a family into elementary school.

These studies are based on the premise that transitions are ideal times to study families and to offer preventive interventions directed toward the strengthening of husbands and wives as partners and parents. Researchers found that from 25 percent to 50 percent of the parents in both studies show evidence of significant distress on standardized measures of individual and marital functioning in the preschool period, despite their apparently low-risk, nonclinical status. Effective interventions during these times have the power to help families' foster optimal cognitive, social, and emotional development in their children.

### Becoming a Family Project

In this study of 96 families, couples met in groups for 6 months from before to after the birth of a first child. This intervention was able to stave off the usually-found decline in marital satisfaction and the tendency to divorce for a period of 3 years. The intervention project is now being replicated and evaluated by the Kreiderkreis Institute in Munich, Germany.

### School Children and Their Families Project

Researchers are now following a new sample of 100 families whose first child was about to enter elementary school when they entered the study. Couples were randomly assigned to work with project staff in two variations of a 4-month long couples group or a brief consultation model, beginning before the children entered kindergarten. The recently completed evaluation of the maritally-focused and parenting-focused groups suggests that the specific focus of the discussion in the groups had fairly specific benefits for the parents.

### Study Results

In parents who had participated in groups focused on marriage, compared with controls, there was less marital conflict in front of their children, the fathers reported less marital conflict and volatility in their relationships as couples, and the mothers reported less volatility and more satisfying overall marital communication when their children were in kindergarten or first grade.

Parents who participated in a group focused on parenting dilemmas showed shifting parenting attitudes and more sensitive parenting styles 1 year later: mothers of boys described less authoritarian parenting attitudes and provided more structure for their sons as they worked on difficult tasks than they had the year before the children entered school, and they described their husbands as more involved in caring for the children after the intervention. Fathers who had been in a parenting-focused group were warmer with their sons, and they described their daughters as more academically and socially competent and as less aggressive, hyperactive, and shy.

Not only did parents' attitudes shift towards the positive. The studies also found that children reaped the benefits of their parents' positive shifts as well. Children improved in their adaptation to school. For example, when parents became more responsive with their children (mostly fathers) or reduced their conflict as a couple in front of their children in the year after the intervention ended, their children improved from fall to spring of kindergarten year in terms of academic and social competence and fewer behavior problems. It is important to note that these benefits accrue to the children in the first and second years after the parents' took part in the group intervention. By contrast, improvement in the comparison parents with the brief consultation was not associated with systematic shifts in their children's adaptation to school.

The study findings support the contention that interventions focused on parent-child relationships and on the relationship between the parents can affect the level at which children set out on their developmental trajectories, both academically and socially. Because children who have difficulty managing the first 2 years of elementary school are at much greater risk of problematic academic and social outcomes in late adolescence, we can now argue that a family-based preventive intervention during the prekindergarten year has the potential as an effective strategy for long-term reduction of the incidence of cognitive, social, and behavior problems at school.

For more information, contact: Dr. Cowan at 510-642-2055. ■

Are They as Healthy as They Look?

FACT:

At any given time, one in every five young people is suffering from a mental health problem. Two-thirds are not getting the help they need.

For a FREE family brochure that could help you or someone you know, call 1-800-789-2647 or go to www.mentalhealth.org

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
Center for Mental Health Services

# Preventive Intervention for Toddlers of Mothers With Depression

**Dante Cicchetti, Ph.D.**
**Sheree Toth, Ph.D.**
University of Rochester
Mt. Hope Family Center

When mothers suffer clinical depression, their children often develop social-emotional, behavioral, and cognitive difficulties. In addition, these children may experience later adjustment problems and mental illness in adulthood. The *Preventive Intervention for Toddlers of Depressed Mothers* program is based on the notion that the relationship between mothers and their infants in the early years is crucial for normal development and that depression makes it more difficult for mothers to provide the love, attention, and stimulation that children need to achieve early developmental milestones. Early difficulties in an infant's ability to cope with discomfort, discriminate different feelings, develop a healthy attachment with his or her caregiver, and be able to develop a sense of self, may all be negatively affected by a mother who is unavailable physically or emotionally due to depression. (Cicchetti and Toth 1998).

Guided by attachment theory and knowledge regarding the central importance of the mother-child relationship in early development, the preventive intervention was targeted at promoting a secure mother-child attachment relationship. The issues around toddlers' emerging sense of self and desire to be independent from their mother was thought to pose a particularly difficult period for all mothers, particularly those struggling with depression. Therefore, the preventive intervention focused on the toddler age period, from 18 to 36 months of age.

Depressed mothers and their toddlers participated in weekly Toddler-Parent Psychotherapy (TPP) sessions during this 18-month timeframe. Within the context of the therapy sessions, communication and feelings between the mother and child were facilitated by therapists. Mothers' interpretations of the child's behavior and emotional reactions were examined, and maternal distortions in perceiving and relating to their child were linked to the mother's own history of attachment relationships. Through the relationship with the therapist, the mother's own way of relating to others was altered, and in turn, these improvements contributed to beneficial changes in the mother-child relationship.

The evaluation of the intervention involved a three-group design. Depressed mothers and their toddlers were randomly assigned to the intervention group or to a nonintervention control group. Additionally, a normative comparison group of mothers without a history of psychopathology and their toddlers was recruited from the same neighborhoods as the depressed mothers. The sample contained a range of socioeconomic status levels, but excluded families reliant on public assistance or with parents with less than a high school education. These exclusion criteria were implemented so that the effects of the intervention on the mother-child relationship could be assessed without the additional challenges of socioeconomic hardship. Across the 3 groups, 160 families participated in comprehensive longitudinal assessments from the baseline at the toddler's age of 18 months through the end of the intervention at the toddler's age of 36 months. Additionally, follow-up assessments at the child's age of four and five years were completed to assess the long-term impact of the intervention.

Comparison of the three groups on baseline assessments revealed that the groups were highly comparable in terms of demographic characteristics. Nevertheless, as predicted, the two depressed groups, although not differing from each other, were substantially different from the nondepressed group. In particular, families with depressed mothers showed higher levels of marital discord, higher family conflict, greater life events stress and parenting hassles, and lower levels of social support. Depressed mothers also differed in terms of a range of personality variables including high levels of negative affect, diminished positive affect, lower self esteem and decreased feelings of competence in the maternal role, and more insecure representations of their own mothers and fathers. Consistent with predictions, higher risk in the families with depressed mothers was related to increased behavior problems in the offspring. Importantly, a higher level of insecure attachment was found among the children of the mothers in the two depressed groups relative to the comparison group. Moreover, toddlers of depressed mothers reported negative feelings about themselves at higher rates.

The evaluation of the impact of the preventive intervention is revealing important differences in outcome for the two groups of depressed mothers and their toddlers. Specifically, differences in outcome for the depressed intervention and nonintervention group have been found at the end of the intervention assessments. Although the three groups did not differ at baseline in terms of the toddlers' cognitive development as assessed by the Bayley Scales of Infant Development, group differences did emerge at post-intervention follow-up, with the nonintervention group showing a decline in cognitive abilities relative to the intervention and normative groups. Notably, differences in verbal IQ were prominent. This finding suggests that the facilitation of communication between mother and toddler that resulted from the preventive intervention was effective in promoting communication skills in the intervention group relative to the nonintervention group.

The preventive intervention on the mother-child attachment relationship also may have increased the rate of secure attachments in the intervention group. Although the two depressed groups did not differ in attachment security at baseline, at follow-up the intervention group showed the same rate of secure attachments as the normative group, and both of these groups were found to have higher rates of secure attachments than the nonintervention

*(Continued on page 9)*

# Maternal and Child Health Bureau

**Gontran Lamberty**
Health Resources and
Services Administration
U.S. Public Health Service

Research on behavior and mental health problems in children is well represented in the applied research projects portfolio of the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB). MCHB is a component of the Health Resources and Services Administration of the U.S. Public Health Service. Currently 10 out of the 52 active MCHB projects fall in this behavior, mental health category. In addition, many of these projects are race, ethnicity, and geographic region specific.

Illustrative examples are described below:

### Infant Temperament in Rural Appalachia—Neonatal to Five Years

This 5-year study will continue to follow a sample of children and families originally recruited for an MCHB-supported project on poverty-related risks experienced by Appalachian children and families. Two research questions are being pursued: (1) Are there certain temperament and mother-infant relationships identified in infancy that predict preschool behavior problems, and early school adjustment? and (2) If these children continue to show good functioning in the family context, then what is the trajectory leading to the 50 percent school dropout rate documented by prior research in this population of children? Results are expected to dispel stereotypes and provide information needed to better understand both risk and protective factors in this neglected cultural group. In addition, interventions that might be used to assist these children could be identified.

### Health Care Utilization: Pediatric Organ Transplantation

This 5-year study looks at children about to receive an organ transplant and seeks to identify psycho-social factors in the family that might predict a greater reliance on additional medical and mental health care assistance, or poor functional outcomes. The study uses a longitudinal design and follows a group of 150 pediatric patients ages 1–18 years at time of transplant who have received liver, heart, or kidney transplants. It is anticipated that the study will produce the first research documentation of the pediatric organ transplant experience of Hispanic children residing in the United States mainland.

### Preventing Mental Health Problems in Physically Ill Children

This 4-year investigation seeks to implement and evaluate a 15-month parent-professional intervention aimed at decreasing the risk of mental illness in children with chronic diseases and their mothers. The proposed intervention will be delivered through a structured protocol by a team consisting of a licensed health care professional with a specialty in child life and a "veteran parent" (a parent who has raised a child with a chronic illness). The study's intervention is designed so that it can be replicated in outpatient clinics serving children with any ongoing serious physical health condition.

### Poverty and the Ecology of African-American Children

This 3-year investigation seeks to understand the ecological, situational, and cultural factors that shape behavior and set African-American children on certain developmental trajectories. The research has four aims: (1) to examine how differences in the physical and social characteristics of neighborhoods are related to differences in parenting among African-American parents across the spectrum of socioeconomic status (SES); (2) to examine how differences in the physical and social characteristics of neighborhoods directly and indirectly (via effects of parents) affect the developmental outcomes of African-American children across the Spectrum of SES; (3) to identify the characteristics of neighborhoods and families that are related to increased resilience of African-American children living in poverty; and (4) to explore how the factors of culture, racial identity, and experience of racial discrimination are associated with parenting and child development outcomes among African-Americans across SES.

### *Preventive Intervention for Toddlers* *(Continued from page 8)*

group. Importantly, in the intervention group, children who were secure at baseline were more likely to remain secure, and among those toddlers in the intervention group who were insecure at baseline, there was a greater shift toward secure attachments at follow-up, relative to the nonintervention group. These results demonstrate the strength of the preventive intervention in improving the developmental trajectories of young children of depressed mothers.

Further analysis is underway that looks at additional indicators of change in developmental course as a result of the intervention and evidence of subsequent group differences emerging on salient developmental tasks at ages four and five. These indicators promise to establish the importance and value of early intervention in reducing the risk of maladaption among children of depressed mothers. Investigators plan to follow this sample into later childhood, a period during which there is likely to be a heightened risk for the emergence of childhood depressive disorder. Assessments in the school age years could show that the positive effects of the preventive intervention on early development help protect children from developing social-emotional, behavioral, and cognitive difficulties in later life.

For more information, contact: Dr. Cicchetti at 716–275–2991. ■

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Special thanks go to Kaira Oweh, age 4, for her artwork on the masthead.

Carol Sue Fromboluti
Editor

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# An Experimental Examination of the Effectiveness of a Social Competence Curriculum with Toddler Age Children Who Have Disabilities

**Mary Beth Bruder**
University of Connecticut Health Center

Children with disabilities are often excluded from group settings because they do not know how to play and get along with other children and adults. However, a new study being conducted by the University of Connecticut Health Center is looking at a way to develop social competence and has the potential to make it possible for more children to take part in inclusive activities.

The project is using a social competence curriculum to teach social skills to toddlers with disabilities. The curriculum was developed in the first year of the grant and is now being implemented and evaluated. The study involves 50 toddlers with disabilities who attend child care-centers and recreational programs side-by-side with children who show no signs of developmental delays. Teachers and parents are learning to use the curriculum to teach social skills to 25 of the toddlers. The other 25 toddlers participate in the regular child care and recreation group curricula.

The project is studying how all children play with other children at age two, before they receive the curriculum, and again at ages three and three and a half after they have received the new curriculum. A follow-up evaluation will take place at 42 months to assess the long-term effects of the new curriculum. That evaluation will examine the development and social competence of the child, the quality of the adult-child interactions in the family, and the overall quality of how the new curriculum serves the children.

The study is funded for 4 years by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education through the Field Initiated Studies Program. Funding began in October 1996 and will end September 2000.

For information, contact: Donna Hinkle, 202-219-2172. ■

# Publications from the U.S. Department of Education's National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education

*The following publications are available by calling 202-219-1935:*

*Including Your Child*—A booklet that covers the first eight years of a child's life and offers families advice and information on how to make sure that children with disabilities receive services and have opportunities for inclusion.

*Read With Me*—A booklet for college students and others interested in setting up a volunteer program to tutor young children.

*Early Childhood Digest: Families and Teachers as Partners* (March 98)—A one page flyer on how families of young children and care givers and teachers can work together.

*Early Childhood Digest: Family Involvement in Early Childhood Programs: How to Choose the Right Program for Your Child* (May 98)—A one page flyer with tips on what parents should look for in a program for their young children.

*Policy Brief and Fact Sheet: Quality in Day Care Centers*—Information from the National Center for Early Development and Learning from their research on quality in day care centers.

*New in September, 1998*

*Early Childhood Digest: Family Resource Centers*—One page flyer on family resource centers, what they are, where to find them, and how they can help parents and families.

*Early Childhood, Where Learning Begins: Geography*—A booklet for parents of children ages 2-5 with fun activities that will help stimulate a child's understanding of geography. ■

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# Starting Early Starting Smart

**Michele Basen**
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Citing the dramatic impact of the early years of childhood on the rest of life, Dr. Nelba Chavez, Administrator, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), announced 12 *Starting Early Starting Smart* grants that will focus resources on addressing the needs of young children from birth to age seven who are at high risk for developing substance abuse or mental health-related problems due to adverse situations.

These grants are the product of a unique public and private collaboration between The Casey Family Program and SAMHSA. Two other U.S. Department of Health and Human Services agencies—the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and the Administration on Children and Families (ACF), along with the U.S. Department of Education—are supporting this effort.

"According to our partner, The Casey Family Program, it is estimated that up to 80 percent of children's distress is related to the combination of substance abuse, child abuse, and/or mental illness in the family," said Dr. Chavez. "Through these projects, we hope to learn more about ways to reach and help these children and their families. Families must be part of the solutions."

Research shows that, increasingly, many children demonstrate problems with respect to relationships, emotions, and behavior, and arrive at school with few intellectual, social, and emotional school readiness skills (Boyer 1991; Edlefsen and Baird 1994). Further, research has indicated consistently (Yoshikawa 1994; Grizenko & Fisher 1992; Hawkins & Catalano 1995) that such problems cannot be traced to a single cause, but to an interaction among individual, community, and family factors. In addition, it is now widely accepted that early intervention is of critical importance during the infancy to preschool period when brain development is more rapid and extensive, and much more vulnerable to environmental influence. Children growing up in poor families, especially those living in troubled neighborhoods, suffer the most health and behavioral health problems. While significant progress in service strategies, parental involvement and "wrap-around" services have been made in the past decade for older children and adolescents suffering from or at risk for substance abuse and serious emotional disturbance, the needs of younger children have been largely unaddressed (Knitzer 1996).

*Starting Early Starting Smart (SESS)* is designed to generate new empirical knowledge about the effectiveness of integrating substance abuse prevention, substance abuse treatment, and mental health services for children aged birth to seven and their families in those settings most widely accessed by this population. SESS and the joint efforts of SAMHSA and The Casey Family Program also deal with the barriers often encountered when different agencies work together by taking into account the abilities, skills, and processes involved in integrating community services.

The *Starting Early Starting Smart* projects will integrate substance abuse and mental health services into service settings families already use. In the first year of this 4-year project, $6.1 million will be awarded to support 5 grants to primary care service settings (public and private health care programs) and 7 grants to early childhood service settings (early learning programs, child care programs, preschools). An additional grant will fund a Data Coordinating Center to work with SAMHSA and the individual programs in gathering and analyzing information across all sites.

"Families may be reluctant to go to substance abuse or mental health centers," Dr. Chavez continued. "We are taking these services where children and families already are. We are not making them come to us."

"It is critical to ensure that children get off to a healthy start in life—both physically and emotionally," said Ruth W. Massinga, Chief Executive Officer of the Casey Family Program. "Addressing the wide range of factors that influence early development in an integrated approach can help to prevent later problems that cause families to dissolve."

The Casey Family Program, which seeks to reduce the number of children in foster care, has dedicated almost $4 million over the next 4 years to this collaborative effort. In addition, when federal funding for this project ends, The Casey Family Program has expressed keen interest in sustaining some of the successful projects.

The 12 sites selected will study 2 questions: Will integrated services increase access to substance abuse and mental health services of children and families? And will integrated services improve outcomes for the children and the family?

Recipients of *Starting Early Starting Smart* grants include:

- The University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL
- Boston Medical Center, Boston, MA
- National Association for Families and Addiction Research and Education, Chicago, IL
- The University of Missouri, Columbia, MO
- The University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center, Albuquerque, NM
- Asian American Recovery Services, San Francisco, CA
- Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD
- Children's Research Institute, Washington, DC
- The Women's Treatment Center, Chicago, IL
- Child Development, Inc. Russellville, AR
- State of Nevada, Las Vegas, NV
- The Tulalip Tribes, Marysville, WA

*Starting Early Starting Smart* can be replicated in communities that are willing to shift their orientation on service delivery in order to better meet the needs of their vulnerable populations. While developing this new approach can be a difficult task, the SESS program and the collaborative partnership at the national level is intended as a first step to demonstrating it can be done.

*(Continued on page 12)*

*Project on Human Development (Continued from page 1)*

**The Contribution of Child-Care Arrangements to Cognitive and Behavioral Outcomes in Middle Childhood: A Multilevel, Longitudinal Study Beginning in Infancy**

Recognizing the increasing amount of time young children spend in nonparental arrangements, the grant was broadened to evaluate young children's psychological development. The scope of the study expanded to focus on the types of nonparental child-care arrangements available to and chosen by parents. The study will ask: (1) what factors shape parent's choices about childcare and determine how these choices are made? and (2) what is the relative contribution of nonparental childcare to cognitive and behavior outcomes in middle childhood?

**Seeking New Policy and Practical Benefits**

At the most basic level, the study will advance our understanding of the developmental pathways to both healthy and unhealthy outcomes. It will significantly expand our knowledge base concerning the factors leading to some of the nation's most serious public health problems: delinquency, criminality, violence, substance abuse, and academic underachievement and school failure.

At the same time, researchers will assemble a substantial database about a major urban area. The study will provide important new information about Chicago in the 1990s—its people, institutions, and resources, and their relationships within communities—along with a detailed description of everyday life in the city's neighborhoods. This database should prove extremely valuable not only to researchers and policy planners but also to community agencies and leaders.

Perhaps most important, the information generated by the study will help to build a rational foundation for urgently needed policy decisions. The study's findings can point the way to a more coordinated approach to social development and its failures—an approach that involves families, schools, communities, and public institutions working together. The findings can help policy planners make more effective use of limited resources in promoting social competence and designing new strategies for preventive intervention, treatment, rehabilitation, and sanctions.

For more information, contact Jim Griffin at 202–219–2168. ■

*Starting Early (Continued from page 11)*

The biggest obstacle likely to be encountered is the issue of "turf" that arises when autonomous service entities commit to a cooperative venture. However, agencies serving the same constituency now acknowledge the mutual need to reduce overlap, coordinate services and address needs in a more efficient and effective manner to produce better child and family outcomes. SESS includes a component to look at and document these collaboration issues and may produce very helpful strategies for the replication process.

SAMHSA is the federal government's lead agency for improving the quality and availability of substance abuse prevention, addiction treatment, and mental health services in the United States, and is a public health agency in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The Casey Family Program is a Seattle-based foundation. Its core mission is to provide long term foster care for children who are unlikely to be reunited with their birth families. Founded by Jim Casey, who started a small delivery service in Seattle that is today known as United Parcel Services (UPS), and endowed by the Casey family, the foundation supports over 1,500 foster children who reside in 13 states. It operates 23 offices, 3 of which, in addition to its headquarters, are in Washington state. As part of its response to the changes in how states and localities approach the welfare of children in the 1990s, The Casey Family Program has broadened its mission to find ways to bring services to more children than it can directly support. *Starting Early Starting Smart* is one result of these efforts.

For more information, contact SAMHSA at 301–443–8956 or The Casey Family Program at 206–270–4940. ■

## Request for Proposal Readers

The National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education at the U.S. Department of Education is looking for qualified people who would be willing to serve as proposal readers. If you are interested, please send your resume to Carol Sue Fromboluti at 555 New Jersey Avenue NW, Room 606C, Washington, DC 20208, 202–219–1672.